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Hopwood rules Leadership Corps cadet challenge. **PAGE 13**

The façade of the Imperial Pacific Resort in Garapan.
ERWIN ENCINARES

Torres: Admin won't tolerate illegal employment practices

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres emphasized yesterday that his administration would not tolerate illegal employment practices, in the wake of a U.S. Department of Labor announcement that it and four China-based construction contractors who violated U.S. standards of employment have reached a settlement.

In a statement, the administration said it is pleased that U.S. DOL finalized the settlement with MCC International Saipan Ltd. Co., Beilida New Materials System Engineering Co. Ltd., Gold Mantis Construction Decoration, and Sino Great Wall International Engineering Co. LLC to pay a total of $13,972,425 in back wages and liquidated damages to over 2,400 employees.

These construction companies used to have contracts with Imperial

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'Parole authority in best interest of CNMI'

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres believes that continuing the parole authority, which immigration authorities use to allow the entry of Chinese and Russian tourists to the CNMI, is in the best interest of

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DOI issues $5M authorization to proceed with CUC projects

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has issued an authorization to proceed in the amount of $5 million for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s Engineering and Environmental Management Company construction management, the CUC pipeline smart pigging, waste management, and facility drainage projects.

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XTRA Airways sued over termination

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A man is suing Florida-based XTRA Airways Inc. for allegedly terminating him without cause after only a few months since hiring him as manager for the airline's Asian operations in 2017.

Thomas L. Nolte, through counsel Colin M. Thompson, is suing XTRA Airways and five unnamed co-defendants for breach of contracts and fraud.

Nolte wants the U.S. District Court for the NMI to hold XTRA Airways liable for lost wages, damages, attorney's fees, and court costs.

XTRA Airways' flights from China to Saipan were cancelled starting Nov. 10, 2017, three months after it opened flights from Nanjing to Saipan.

Nolte, at that time XTRA Airways' Pacific Operations manager, told *Saipan Tribune* that their China ser-

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BUSINESS
Trade wars generate no medals, monuments or military parades but leave economic wreckage.

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A bill that would create restrictions on rifle sales passed the Florida Senate.

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LIFE & STYLE
The #MeToo movement has become a global phenomenon. Yet its impact varies widely.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Torres: Airport fee hike was in the plans since November

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said the planned airport fee hike was published last November and did not receive any comments then, hence the decision to delay its implementation.

Speaking at a previous interview, Torres said the airport fee hike, which was recently delayed by the Department of Finance, has been planned since late last year. Torres' comments were solicited prior to Finance announcing that it would be delaying the airport fee hikes.

He said that when the Division of Customs came out with the notice that it was pushing for an airport fee hike from $1 per passenger to $7 per passenger, no comments were submitted opposing the idea. Torres reiterated the importance of commenting on governmental policy changes within the approved time frame.

Torres

"Whether $7 is too much is yet to be experienced, but I want the community to know that when we give opportunity for private sector, government, or private citizens to make comments, that is when we should make comments" the governor said.

He still believes, though, that a hike on the airport fees should be implemented. Finance Secretary Larissa Larson earlier told *Saipan Tribune* that the fees have not been changed since the 1990s.

"…I do know that [Customs] needs additional revenue," said Torres, adding that he was unsure of whether the $7 airport fee was fair. "This revenue is used for Customs to enhance their programs."

Larson indicated in a separate interview with *Saipan Tribune* that the Division of Customs would be delaying the airport fee hike by at least two weeks to seek comments from airlines. She added that a complex formula was used to obtain the $7 airport fee hike and that the formula would be revisited once all the comments from airlines are compiled and reviewed.

Larson did not specify a timeline for the implementation of the airport fee hike; however, the initial schedule for implementation of the airport fee hike was on March 1, 2018.

THANKSGIVING DINNER
Students perform with their *wadaiko* (Japanese drums) to open the 2018 "Participate and Learn Program" Thanksgiving dinner of Marianas High School, Francisco M. Sablan Middle School, and Seisa High School in Japan celebrating 32 years of partnership held at the Saipan World Resort in San Jose last Friday.
BEA CABRERA

Man arrested for alleged machete attack

Police arrested a man who allegedly slapped another man in the face and attacked him with a machete at a home in Koblerville early Saturday morning.

Shadel Daniel, 32, was arrested for assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace. His bail was set Monday at $10,000 cash; preliminary hearing is on March 12 at 1:30pm.

According to police, the victim was with some of his friends at a home of another friend in Koblerville early Saturday morning when Daniel arrived, slapped the victim in the face, retrieved a machete from his car, and allegedly swung the machete at the victim.

Another friend intervened and told the suspect to stop. Daniel returned the machete to his car but allegedly slapped the victim again.

Daniel left the house after seeing that the house's owner had called the police. A police officer later found the vehicle and Daniel along Bibingka Avenue in Koblerville and arrested him at 4:33am that same day. The police report did not indicate the motive behind the attack. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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High schoolers invited to join Project PROM 2018

The Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence is inviting CNMI high school juniors and seniors to learn about advocacy and earn free stuff for their prom by joining the Project PROM 2018 program.

Now in its seventh year, the program has provided an opportunity for scores of students to not only receive formal attire, accessories, and related services for their prom but to learn from professionals about the issue of sexual violence and how they can be part of prevention efforts.

"This opportunity comes in the form of the Project PROM advocacy workshop that we try to have for the youth on Saipan, Rota and Tinian," said NMCADSV program manager Angelyn N. Palacios. "The workshop includes presentations and discussions followed by a chance to select items for their prom."

The Project PROM program, which is part of awareness and outreach efforts related to Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, is mainly supported by donations and sponsorships from the community. Donations may include formal wear, shoes, accessories, gift certificates, as well as related services like hair styling, makeup styling, and clothing alteration.

This year's sponsors include the CNMI Youth Affairs Office and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Community Guidance Center-Substance Abuse Prevention Services Unit, who are also offering participants the opportunity to be part of their project to develop public service announcements that aim to raise awareness on sexual violence, and underage drinking.

"When we started Project PROM, we were looking for a creative way to help our youth not only understand the issue of sexual violence but to also help empower them with information as they are developing their own values and ideas on relationships and sex," Palacios said.

Those interested in joining Project PROM may apply by submitting an essay answering the following questions "In your own words, how do you define sexual violence? What does advocacy mean to you? How will you advocate against sexual violence to your peers? Give examples." The essay must be 300 words minimum.

Essay submissions must also include the following information: applicant's full name, school attending, grade level, age, gender, contact number(s), and email address. Essays may be emailed to info@endviolencenmi.org as an MS Word document, as a PDF, or within the body of the email.

Saipan high school juniors and seniors may also submit essays to the NMCADSV main office in Springs Plaza along Middle Road during regular hours of operation (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm), or by emailing info@endviolencenmi.org. The deadline is 11:59pm on Tuesday, March 20, 2018.

The Project PROM Advocacy Workshop for Saipan will be on Friday, March 23, from 10am to 2pm with the venue to be announced later. Those selected to attend will be updated and notified via email and/or phone.

Note that details on the Project PROM Advocacy Workshop on Rota and Tinian will be forthcoming.

For more information on Project PROM, contact the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence at (670) 234-3878 or email info@endviolencenmi.org. ***(PR)***

Revocation of man's release is sought for alleged battery

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The U.S. Probation Office wants a probationer's supervised release revoked after he allegedly beat up his girlfriend, causing multiple injuries.

Tarell Darnell Murphy appeared before the U.S. District Court for the NMI yesterday afternoon after the U.S. Marshal Service served him with a summons.

The U.S. Probation Office asked the court to let Murphy explain why his supervised release should not be revoked. Bruce Berline was appointed as counsel for Murphy.

U.S. Marshals arrested Murphy on Saipan in April 2017 based on an indictment filed in South Carolina for false statement.

The U.S. District of Carolina issued an arrest warrant against Murphy on July 30, 2015, for failure to appear for an initial appearance on a supervised release violation scheduled for July 21, 2015.

Last April, the U.S. District Court for the NMI ordered the transfer of Murphy to the District of South Carolina. Murphy agreed to voluntary removal.

According to U.S. Probation officer Gregorio F. Arriola in the petition for revocation, on Aug. 19, 2017, District of South Carolina Senior Judge Margaret B. Seymour sentenced Murphy to time served for false statement.

Seymour placed Murphy on two years of supervised release with conditions.

Last Oct. 31, the jurisdiction of Murphy's case was transferred to the District of the NMI after the defendant moved back to Saipan.

Arriola said that among the mandatory conditions of the supervised release is that Murphy shall not commit another crime.

Arriola said that, last Feb. 6, Murphy pleaded guilty to assault and battery (domestic violence) in the Superior Court. Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo sentenced him to 36 days imprisonment, along with other conditions. He was given credit for 36 days of time served.

Arriola noted that the Superior Court permitted Murphy to depart the CNMI on unsupervised probation, provided that he satisfies all the conditions in the judgment commitment order. According to assistant attorney general Jonathan Wilberscheid, Murphy strangled and choked his then-girlfriend on Saipan on Dec. 27, 2017.

When three police officers responded to the incident at 5:58am last Dec. 27, the victim was limping and had a swollen and bruised cheek and has scratch marks on her neck. She was taken to the hospital where she was treated for injuries.

She said Murphy has been physically abusive since they started a relationship in February 2017.

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Transmission: Automatic
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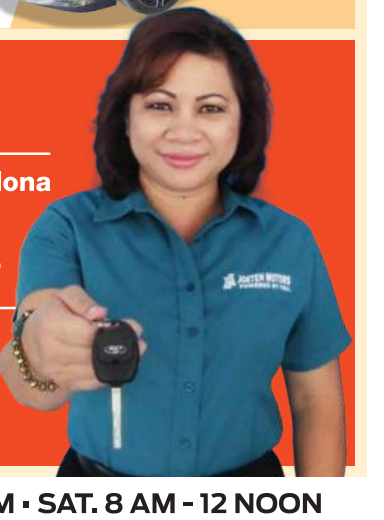

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Office on Aging hopes for more funding

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Office of Aging is not immune to inflation, with director Walter Manglona saying that higher prices have dented the agency's $480,000 budget for fiscal year 2018.

Manglona hopes the administration of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and the Legislature would keep the *man'amko*, the islands' elderly, in mind when it divvies up additional supplemental budget from the casino revenue tax.

"The administration right now is extremely supportive of the *man'amko* and they are able to provide us with enough funding to be able to continue our operations. However, what I find challenging right now is the fact that the indirect cost is…skyrocketing. So that took a lot of money that we could've been using for our services," said Manglona in an interview following a presentation at yesterday's Rotary Club of Saipan meeting at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

While unwilling to give a ballpark figure of how much more funding the center needs, Manglona hinted that he did ask for a budget of $1 million last fiscal year but only got a little less than half of that.

"We didn't get it this time, but I'm optimistic that the administration would not forget the *man'amko*," he said alluding to the $24-million supplemental budget recently signed by Torres, half of which went to the Public School System.

Areas of operations Manglona wants beefed up are the transportation and nutrition programs of the Office on Aging.

"If we're going to get money, more of [it] would be used for our nutrition and transportation services. For a while, we wanted to improve our transportation services. We wanted to have new vans. We're still looking at acquiring new vans for Rota and Tinian and, of course, Saipan," he said. "[We need] additional bus drivers as Tinian and Rota have no bus drivers and I want that included in my budget."

He also needs more employees for his offices on Tinian and Rota for their nutritional programs.

"On Saipan, we have around 14 staff. I need and I'm OK with five more and two more for Tinian and Rota," he said.

Manglona said Tinian Mayor Joey Patrick San Nicolas and Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig are supportive of the Office on Aging's nutrition program.

He said Tinian and Rota mayor staff help with cooking the meals of the *man'amko*. Unlike Saipan where there are caterers, the Office on Aging still cooks the meals of their congregants on the two islands.

Office on Aging director Walter Manglona was the Rotary Club of Saipan's guest speaker at its weekly meeting yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.
MARK RABAGO

Manglona said whatever extra funding his office gets from future supplemental budgets is all right with him.

"Whatever we get, I'm still OK with it. I know the administration is always supportive of our *man'amko*. I don't want to ask for more than I need. But if we can get more than we need, it just means more services for the people we provide it for."

The Office on Aging currently serves 534 individuals in the CNMI, which includes the *man'amko* and their caregivers. On Saipan alone, the *man'amko* center is open to 90 congregants and serves some 200 homebound elderly.

ERRATUM

The story titled, "Nursing graduate Atrero passes NCLEX," that was originally published on March 5, 2018, was updated yesterday because it originally identified the subject as "Artero" instead of "Atrero." The original article identified her properly. Our apologies.

PAROLE

From Page 1

the Commonwealth.

In a statement on Monday, Torres said an extensive white paper highlighting the importance of the parole authority was submitted to the White House once U.S. President Donald J. Trump took office.

"Since Day 1 of the Trump administration, Gov. Torres has been in frequent communication regarding our economy, including CW workers and parole. We put together a white paper last year to strengthen the understanding of the administration and have given this to our delegate's office for their consideration last year," said the administration statement.

"It is worth noting that given the importance of these issues to the people of the CNMI, Gov. Torres believes it is in the best interest of our ongoing discussions with the White House and Congress to be cautious of the policy rhetoric we are using. Through collective action and collaborative discussions, we can get a lot done together to strengthen the economic viability of the CNMI for the long term," the statement added.

The parole authority is responsible for bringing in almost half of the total visitor arrivals to the CNMI, whose main economic driver is its tourism industry. South Korea and China make up about 95 percent of total tourist arrivals.

South Korea is one of 13 countries that are under the visa waiver program, in addition to Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom.

Nationals of China, on the other hand, are allowed to enter the CNMI under the Marianas parole authority, which grants Russian and Chinese tourists entry to the CNMI. Guam is only allowed to grant entry to Russian tourists.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) said in a press conference in late February that he has reason to be alarmed about a possible termination of the Marianas parole authority.

He added that overstaying tourists, working tourists, on-the-job deaths, minimum wage violations, birth tourism, and more could jeopardize the parole authority under the Trump administration.

"[The program's end] would be a major harm to our economy," he had said, adding that he wishes to share more details but is unable to.

At the same press conference, Sablan said that a "bipartisan, bicameral letter" is being drafted to request the Governmental Accountability Office to study the repercussions of the termination of the parole authority.

GAO previously studied the repercussions of ending the CNMI's foreign worker program, which is slated to expire this Dec. 31, 2019. The study found that the CNMI economy is unsustainable without foreign labor. That labor pool is being touted as behind the CNMI's ability to achieve a gross domestic product growth of about 28.6 percent in fiscal year 2016 alone. According to the GAO study, it is estimated that the CNMI GDP will decline by about 26 percent to 62 percent without the foreign workforce.

TORRES

From Page 1

Pacific International (CNMI) LLC to build their casino-resort on Saipan, the Imperial Pacific Resort.

"We received assurances from the U.S. DOL last November that there were continu[ous] discussions about a settlement being reached with the contractors who hired these individuals to come to the CNMI and work illegally.

"Throughout the process, the CNMI Department of Labor provided assistance and as much information as possible, not only to U.S. DOL, but to the workers as well," the statement added.

It is unknown how the U.S. DOL will enforce the settlement since it has been reported earlier that these China-based companies have already fled the CNMI and U.S. DOL doesn't have jurisdiction over these companies in China.

The U.S. DOL statement, released early morning yesterday, said that MCC, Beilida, and Gold Mantis have employed workers who entered the CNMI as tourists from China. The federal agency also noted that the workers shouldered their own airfare and paid recruitment fees and have incurred debt of about $6,000 or more each.

"We support the U.S. DOL's findings in ensuring not only back wages, but also liquidated damages that will be paid to employees who were adversely affected at no fault of their own. We also support the U.S. DOL's enforcement of labor laws. As stated in previous statements and interviews, the governor denounces the illegal practices by these contractors and has already implemented strict local measures to mandate proper employee documentation in order to better assist our federal partners in the enforcement of labor laws," the statement from the administration noted.

"Let's be clear. This administration and our community will not tolerate any form of illegal employment practices that harm any worker or our economic viability," it added.

IPI also pleased; five workers remain

In a separate statement, IPI said it is also pleased to see a resolution to the workers claims.

"While Imperial Pacific is not privy to the terms of the settlement, Imperial Pacific expresses its utmost appreciation to the United States Department of Labor and all parties that were involved in the settlement," it said. "Imperial Pacific will continue to cooperate with all stakeholders and follow all local and federal laws and regulations."

According to sources close to the workers, there are at lease five remaining Chinese workers "who were employed by MCC that still have not been compensated what they are owed under the law."

Gong Benji, one of the five workers, said his coworkers have been able to receive back pay, liquidated damages, and compensation for recruitment fees. He added that news surrounding another settlement with MCC to include the five remaining workers existed; however, they were not informed of the specifics.

"So how can we return home and face the people who loaned us money to come here? We cannot simply tell the loan sharks that there is a press release. We need to give them money. At one point, Imperial Pacific offered to pay us only our back pay if we agreed to return [to] China, but this would not even cover our debt, so we refused. In retaliation, Imperial Pacific then stopped providing us with housing, food, or water. Imperial Pacific benefits every day from the casino we built. Why don't they pay us our back pay, liquidated damages, and recruitment fees like our co-workers received?" Gong asked in a message translated from Chinese to English by his lawyer.

Gong was reportedly offered $2,093.82 in compensation to return to China. The amount excluded recruitment fees, liquidated damages, and "nothing for the fact that he has been waiting a year to be paid what he is legally owed," said a lawyer familiar with the case.

According to Gong, his colleagues received from $12,000 to $15,000 in settlements, while others were even paid over $20,000.

Previous statements from the CNMI DOL noted that the calculations in the offers made to the workers were derived from the hours they worked at the rate of the minimum wage back then.

DOI

From Page 1

OIA grants manager Krystina B. Alfano notified CNMI Capital Improvement Projects administrator Elizabeth S. Balajadia on Monday of OIA's approval of the authorization to proceed with the projects.

In the ATP, Alfano stated that OIA has reviewed the CIP projects and found them in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality Regulations, and DOI NEPA regulations, among other regulations.

Deputy attorney general Lillian Tenorio, counsel for the CNMI government, informed the U.S. District Court for the NMI yesterday about DOI's issuance of the $5 million in ATP.

Tenorio said these funds will be available for the CUC projects and the supporting scope of work.

Tenorio said the CNMI will not reprogram these funds without the mutual agreement of the parties—CNMI, CUC, and the U.S. government.

With this ATP, she said, the CNMI has its funding obligation to CUC for 2018.

XTRA

From Page 1

vice is being suspended indefinitely due to certain contractual issues with their Chinese client, Dream Pacific Aviation Services HK Ltd.

XTRA Airways entered the airline market in China and Saipan in early 2017. At that time, Nolte was living and working in Colorado.

According to Thompson in the complaint filed last Monday, after a couple of phone interviews with XTRA Airways vice president for international markets Brian Dagot and other XTRA Airways executives, Nolte was invited to the company headquarters in Coral Gables, Florida to meet with the company's chief operating officer and the chief executive officer.

After meeting with the principals of XTRA Airways in Florida on April 26, 2017, Nolte was told that they wanted him to manage the airline's Asian operations from the Saipan office.

Thompson said XTRA Airways offered Nolte the job as manager of Asia Pacific on May 23, 2017, for $80,000 a year. Three days later, Nolte accepted the offer and agreed to relocate to Saipan, which he did on June 9, 2017.

Thompson said that, last Dec. 1, XTRA Airways notified Nolte that he would be removed from his position effective Nov. 27, 2017.

Thompson said XTRA Airways breached the offer of employment by terminating Nolte's contract without excuse of justification with less than a year.

Thompson said XTRA Airways made false statements to Nolte about its ability to operate flights between the CNMI and China.

"XTRA Airways could not legally operate flights between China and the CNMI at the time Mr. Nolte first arrived [on] Saipan," the lawyer said.

Labor strengthens outreach to private companies

Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente, along with the Division of Enforcement, continues to reach out to the private sector, saying that collaboration is key to addressing workforce misinformation and enforcement concerns.

"I am pleased that our private sector is reaching out to our department to discuss labor laws and renew their knowledge of current issues," Benavente said.

She related that the department recently met with Marvin I. Buston, administration manager of HBR International, and its general manager, Eduardo Lim.

HBR does general construction, building maintenance services, and manpower supply services and has been in business in the CNMI for 27 years.

"We want to highlight the fact that we have companies who have been in the Commonwealth for decades and are diligently abiding by our local and federal laws and adopting best practices," Benavente said. "We encourage more of our private partners to learn more as we build toward improving our labor policies and workforce."

Labor Enforcement director Gil San Nicolas noted that Labor met with HBR International staff and management last week, at the request of the company, to discuss information about CNMI labor laws.

"We provided information such as CNMI federal minimum wage, the CW-1 program, medical and repatriation expenses, to name a few. The HBR employees asked questions about time and attendance, holiday pay, and safety standards. They were also informed about DOL regulations regarding their employment as contract workers. We want to reiterate that strengthening this dialogue improves enforcement and employee protection. There is still so much work to be done but we are seeing positive feedback from employers and their companies," San Nicolas said.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said that labor outreach builds on the current and future needs of the Commonwealth.

"Our private sector needs to be provided with reliable information and resources, and Labor is adapting to improved policies to build toward a resilient workforce. While the department continues its data collection, we must not lose sight of the key industries and continued assistance and collaboration in filling information gaps so that we can address the future of our economy and our community," Torres said.

Benavente said that, while training to enhance employment services took place just last month, communicating with employers is needed at the same time.

"We are pushing to develop our workforce and encouraging companies to be as competent in current labor practices as possible. We stand by our commitment to the long-term and welcome more of our small businesses and large companies to reach out to us for clarification or to renew their knowledge," Benavente said.

For more information on the Division of Enforcement, log on to www.marianaslabor.net or call 322-4365 or 323-9938. ***(PR)***

Department of Labor Enforcement director Gil San Nicolas discusses the CNMI federal minimum wage, the CW-1 program, medical and repatriation expenses, and safety standards during an outreach with HBR International employees.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Charges vs 2 men in alleged 'ice' lab dismissed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The charges against two of four men arrested in connection with an alleged clandestine methamphetamine lab on Saipan were dismissed without prejudice on Monday.

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo handed down the decision after assistant attorney general Jonathan Robert Glass Jr. moved for the voluntary dismissal of the charges against Vincent David Cabrera Jr. and Eugene Blas Repeki.

The government is allowed to re-file the case in the future.

Cabrera and Repeki, along with Sidney Capelle Kani and Rick U. Omar Jr. are facing separate charges in federal court arising from their operation of an alleged "ice" laboratory.

Govendo ordered that the custody of Cabrera and Repeki be transferred to the U.S. Marshal and the U.S. Bureau of Prisons.

In the CNMI government's motion for voluntary dismissal, Glass said the U.S. government is prosecuting the case against Cabrera and Repeki.

In the Superior Court case, Cabrera and Repeki were charged with illegal possession of a controlled substance.

The detention hearing for Cabrera, Repeki, Kani, and Omar in the federal case was held yesterday, Tuesday, before the U.S. District Court for the NMI.

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agents and CNMI Drug Enforcement Task Force and Customs officers arrested the four and searched the alleged clandestine "ice" laboratory in a hotel room and at a Dandan home last Feb. 25.

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PUBLIC NOTICE
APPLICATION FOR CNMI WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

The Antidegradation Policy of the Water Quality Standards of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands states that the protection and maintenance of the quality of the waters of the Commonwealth are an historic and legal right of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands, and that this shall be the public policy of the Commonwealth. Any proposed activity that will impact the waters of the Commonwealth must receive a Water Quality Certification from the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ). In issuing a Water Quality Certification, BECQ must assure that the proposed activity complies with all applicable provisions of the CNMI Water Quality Standards and federal Clean Water Act, will not interfere with the attainment or maintenance of the existing or designated uses of the Commonwealth waters, and that all appropriate and practicable steps have been taken to minimize potential adverse impacts to aquatic life and human health.

Upon receiving an application, BECQ issues a public notification which describes the proposed activity and potential impacts on water quality, aquatic life and human health. A thirty (30) day public comment period will commence from the date of the first publication of the notice.

The Administrator of BECQ may conduct a public hearing to solicit comments on the application if a hearing is requested by the public. BECQ will make a determination for issuing a Water Quality Certification based upon a complete technical review of the application and the public comments received.

BECQ is soliciting comments on the following renewal application for a CNMI Water Quality Certification.

1. APPLICANT:
Saipan World Resort
Henry Hun Kim, General Manager
PO Box 500066
Saipan, MP 96950

2. APPLICABLE STATUTORY AUTHORITY: CNMI Commonwealth Environmental Protection Act (Public Law No. 3-23); CNMI Water Quality Standards, Chapter 65-130

3. LOCATION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY: Waterfront area in swim zone, Saipan World Resort

4. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY: Installation and operation of an "Aqua-Park" consisting of five types of inflatable marine recreational apparatuses described as (1) Super-tramp 23 (floating trampoline); (2) Universal (a hexagon-shaped apparatus for connection purposes); (3) Runway 20 (five floating connection paths); (4) Marine Rock Climbing Tube (a stand-alone, sturdy, flexible climbing apparatus); and (5) Marine Slide Tube (a stand-alone, sturdy, flexible slide apparatus). In addition to the apparatuses, a total of ten concrete anchors will be installed and maintained. Total benthic footprint of all anchors combined is 29 square feet. The Aqua Park will be situated immediate west of the resort within the Saipan Lagoon.

5. IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: The project may have direct and cumulative impacts on seagrass and high value coastal resources in the Susupe lagoon.

6. PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES: Monitoring project will include scientific design, protocols, data collection processes, and other aspects to fully conform coastal management program goals and objectives. Elements will include water quality monitoring and marine biological community monitoring, as well as the attempt to document and design appropriate mitigation for any significant adverse impacts to the Saipan Lagoon's environment.

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$1,000.00 CONSOLATION PRIZE
Win 40" Polaroid Smart TV | Patio Furniture Set | Cookware and MORE!!!
FREE REFRESHMENT!
EVERY WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY * INSTANT BINGO
EVERY FRIDAY & SATURDAY * PACKAGE GAMES
DOOR OPEN 7PM, GAMES STARTS 7:30PM
EVERY SUNDAY, DOOR OPEN 2PM, GAMES STARTS 2:30PM
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EASY TO PLAY & EASY TO WIN AT
INSTANT "MASSIVE" BINGO, INSTANT CASH WINNERS!
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Must be 18yrs to play
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Legislature to examine CHCC's other needs

By BEA CABRERA
bea_cabrera@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Legislature will give another look at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s needs to ensure that patient care is always a priority, according to House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Angel Demapan.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres signed into law last week the $24-million supplemental budget from the Special Casino Gross Revenue Tax Account, with $2.75 million given to CHCC.

"After this allocation of $2.75 million, we will be visiting their priorities again. In the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation, we have a appropriated $2.5 million to help with the purchase of hospital equipment and the $2.75 million will help them with indigent care costs," he said.

"Indigent care still [represents] a significant number of unfunded liabilities for CHCC and so we intend to continue when there is an opportunity to put more money to indigent care at CHCC. This way, the hospital can continue to provide services to those who are uninsured and underinsured," he added.

Demapan said the Legislature is constantly updated on the things the hospital needs. He said that CHCC submitted a list of areas that they need funds for, particularly equipment, and the Saipan delegation has already given the corporation $2.5 million for equipment.

"There are still some facility upgrades that we have provided funding for," he said. "This is something that we will need to work with them as to how much funding we need to provide based on internal revenues that they have generated in the hospital.

"So we have to analyze what their shortfall is and how we can cover it in the supplemental budget process," he added.

Demapan said the supplemental budget has never been this big.

"The process required a lot of negotiation and evaluation on how to distribute the money. At the end of the day, the recipients are the ones who the House and Senate agreed to appropriate the funds to. In this round of budget, we looked at healthcare, education, [the] Drug Court program, as all these things really need the help," he said.

"After we get done in this round, when supplemental revenues become available again, we will be able to take care of other critical departments, especially in law enforcement, Division of Customs, and our workforce issues at the Department of Labor and their new initiatives," he added.

Demapan said the signing of the supplemental budget went through a rigorous process of compromises.

"Leadership requires the art of compromise. With the signing of the bill, we saw the compromise between the House, Senate, and the administration and Public Law 19-42 is something that will go down in our history as a very significant day of reflecting on how far our economy has come," he said.

"Without the economic improvement that we are experiencing today and the resurging revenues, having a supplemental would have been an imagination. Clearly, everything is coming into full circle and our people are benefitting from this reinvigorated economy," he added.

Isla Montessori School opening soon

This August will bring a new, vibrant school to Saipan.

The Isla Montessori School is excited to announce open registration for primary (ages 3-6) and lower elementary (ages 6-9) for the coming fall 2018/2019 school term.

All lead teachers at the school are Montessori-certified, have experience within the Saipan community, and have eight years or more experience working in a Montessori setting.

Isla Montessori believes in an authentic Montessori approach to education that assists children in navigating through self, community, environment, and cultural awareness so that they can become exceptional humans. The school commits to a partnership with the island community as resources in creating conscious and well-rounded adults. Isla Montessori is a community and teacher-run organization, dedicated to enriching the whole child, while maintaining academic rigor.

As a part of its partnership with parents and community, Isla Montessori will offer schooling from 8am to 3pm, and it also plans to offer an active and dynamic 3pm to 5pm after-school enrichment program to include local arts, language, music, etc. Artists, dance instructors, music instructors, and those interested in sharing local crafts and skills with the youth of the island are encouraged to inquire as the school forms this program. A full schedule will be available by Aug. 1, 2018.

For more information, visit the school website at https://www.islamontessori.org/, email info@islamontessori.org, or call Sarah Fryling at (670) 287-5282. Registration is open. Applications are downloadable from the website and available through email request. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
Special Education Program

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT

Pursuant to Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 & GEPA, the Public School System Special Education Program is required to provide at least 60 days prior to submission of grant application for funds, a 60 day circulation notice with an opportunity for public comment on the application for at least 30 days during that period and provide an opportunity for the general public, including individuals with disabilities and parents of youth with disabilities, to provide comments.

DUE TO THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS ON MAY 11, 2018

60-Day Public Circulation Period: March 5, 2018 to May, 2018
30-Day Public Comment Period: April 1, 2018 to April 30, 2018

Hard copies of the Grant Applications are available from Monday – Friday, 8:00am-4:00pm at the following locations:

Special Education Program Office located in Capitol Hill, Saipan Bldg. 1224
You may also access the Grant Application on the PSS Website: https://www.cnmipss.org/student-support-services/

Comments may be submitted by fax to (670) 664-4846, hand delivered to Special Education Program Office located in Capitol Hill, Saipan, Bldg. 1224 or phone your comments to: (670) 322-4545

For more information, please contact Suzanne Lizama, Director, Special Education Program at (670) 322-4545

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Regular General Membership Meeting

When: Saturday, March 10, 2018
Time: 8:30 am – 12:00 pm
Location: Herman's Modern Bakery Conference Room

Agenda

1. Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum
2. Review and Adoption of Agenda
3. Review and Adoption of Minutes
   a. Special Meeting 02/24/2018
4. Public Comments (5 Minutes per Commenter)
5. Old Business
   a. Update Public Comments on State Plan Modifications
   b. Update Public Comments on Policy Manual
6. New Business
   a. Proposed Transfer of Funds
   b. Proposed Board Training
7. Executive Session
8. Next Meeting
9. Adjournment

Approved by:
/s/
Josephine DLG. Mesta
Chair, SWDB

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

for

Share View Travel Corporation

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Share View Travel Corporation is proposing to occupy 4 existing 2-storey structures and 1 maintenance building with a total of 18 units to operate a Bed & Breakfast establishment.. This use is classified as "Bed & Breakfast" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 1625 NEW-9-R2 in Gualo Rai. This area is zoned as Village Residential.

Date: Wednesday, March 21, 2018
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Governor Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center, Susupe

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, March 20, 2018. Please send written comments via e-mail toTherese.Ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Chairman

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Proposed Amendment to the Official Saipan Zoning Map (Rezone) for Marianas General Clinic dba Marianas Specialty Referral Hospital/Pacific Fertility Institute

The Commonwealth Zoning Board is seeking your comments on the following proposed amendment (rezone) to the Official Saipan Zoning Map. Marianas General Clinic dba Marianas Specialty Referral Hospital/Pacific Fertility Institute is requesting to rezone Lots # EA 216-2-1, EA 216-3, EA 833-12, EA 833-13, EA 833-14-1, EA 833-14-R-1, & EA 833-20 in As Perdido (Mango Resort properties), from "Village Commercial" to "Mixed Commercial" zoning district.

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: March 21, 2018
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Multipurpose Center, Susupe

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 3:00 pm, March 20, 2018. Please send written comments via e-mail to Therese.Ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Chairman

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

(This ad is paid for by NMHC.)

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DATE: March 22, 2018
TIME: 10:00 AM

NMHC RFP 2018-004

"Accounting Services"

Proposal packets will be available on Wednesday, March 07, 2018, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of Fifty Dollars ($50.00) is required for each set. Payment shall be by cash, credit card, money order or cashier's check payable to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation.

The provisions of the CNMI Procurement regulations, NMIAC 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A mandatory pre-proposal conference is scheduled on Thursday, March 16, 2018, at 10:00 a.m. at the NMHC Conference Room, Saipan. Only those individuals who have paid the RFP Package Fee are allowed to attend the pre-proposal conference. All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to Mr. Jesse S. Palacios, Corporate Director, NMHC, Saipan, fax to (670)234-9021, no later than Friday, March 16, 2018, 4:30 p.m. local time. Response to questions shall be shared with all proposers.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Acting Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ Aubry Hocog
Chairwoman,
NMHC Board of Directors

/s/ Herman S. Sablan
Director,
Division of Procurement & Supply

CNMI Women's Month March 2018

E V E N T S C H E D U L E

February 28	10 am	Proclamation Signing	Bldg. 1346, Capitol Hill
March 1, 8, 15, 22	5 pm	Arts & Crafts for Women	Street Market, Garapan Fishing Base
March 2	1 pm	Financial Literacy	Tanapag Middle School
March 3	2:30 - 5:30 pm	MYPros March for H.E.R.S.	American Memorial Park
March 4	7:30 am	Day of Prayer	San Jose Church
March 6	6 pm	Financial Literacy	Dan Dan Middle School (PTSA)
March 7	9 am - 11 am	Storytelling Cultural Practice	Carolinian Affairs Office Grounds
March 8, 15, 22	7:30 am	Parenting Tips	KKMP Radio Talk Show
March 9	1:30 pm	Oral Health Presentation	Garapan Community Development Center
March 9,16	5 pm - 7 pm	NMC-CDI Tech Hour	Bldg. W, Northern Marianas College
March 13	6:00 pm	Financial Literacy	Koblerville Elementary School (PTSA)
March 14	8:30 am - 11:30 am	Coconut Oil Making	Carolinian Affairs Office Grounds
March 15	10:30 am - 11:30 am	Computer Class	Joeten-Kiyu Public Library
March 17	9:00 am - 1:30 pm	CWA "Tupperaiser"	Carolinian Affairs Office Grounds
March 19	TBA	Financial Literacy	Kagman Community Center
March 20	5:30 pm - 7:30 pm	Naked Colors Paint Night	(By Registration)
March 21	8:30 am - 11:30 am	Weaving	Carolinian Affairs Office Grounds
March 22	10:30 am - 11:30 am	Computer Class	Joeten-Kiyu Public Library
March 24	5:30 - 9:30 pm	Mother/Daughter Night	Multi-Purpose Center
March 26-27	7:30 am	Women's Summit	Multi-Purpose Center
March 29	10:30 am - 11:30 am	Computer Class	Joeten-Kiyu Public Library

Website: www.commonwealthwomensassociation.com
Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/cnmiwomen/ • Email Address: commonwealthwomenassociation@gmail.com
Contact Information: 233-9411

Women issues come to the fore in March for HERS

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The second annual March for HERS event brought together women of all ages to discuss issues that women in general—the #MeToo movement and "Times Up"—and women in the Marianas currently with.

Last Saturday, women gathered at the American Memorial Park Visitor Center's theater to witness the presentation of five individuals who discussed issues such as women's health, women's empowerment, women's representation, and women's safety.

The presentations got women to thinking whether they are satisfied with how they are currently being treated in the Marianas, or if they want to be the drivers for any change that may be needed in the Marianas.

This year's theme was "Empowering Women to be Leaders for Change," and the event sought to educate attendees about women's issues through a series of brief presentations and open discussions with a wide variety of experts on health, economic security, representation, and safety issues.

According to former representative Tina Sablan, males dominate most of the representation roles in the CNMI; currently, there are only about two women in the House of Representatives and one woman in the Senate. She urged all the women at the event to consider standing up and representing women's voices in the Legislature.

To end the event, women of all ages and men who supported the cause created signs that they held up as they marched around the American Memorial Park.

Over 30 participated in the march, in a symbolic support for women everywhere who need the reassurance that they are powerful and that their voices can be heard if they want it to be.

Women of all ages gather at the American Memorial Park Visitors Center theater to participate in the 2nd March for HERS conference and walk last Saturday. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

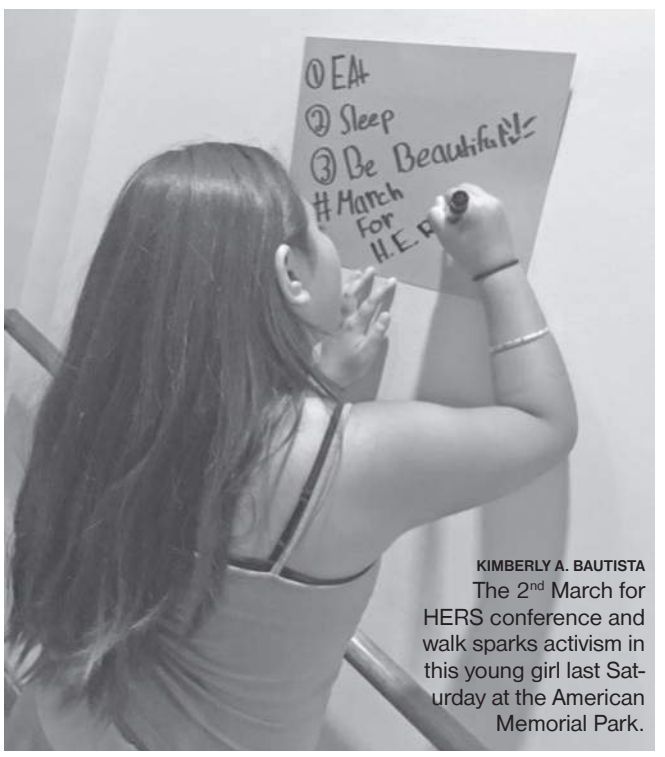
KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
Former representative Tina Sablan makes a presentation on the importance of women representation during the 2nd March for HERS conference and walk at the American Memorial Park last Saturday.

Maisie Tenorio, executive director of the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, gives her presentation on women's safety and domestic violence awareness at the 2nd March for HERS conference and walk at the American Memorial Park last Saturday. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

2018 Miss Marianas Celine Cabrera, left, poses with the sign she created at the 2nd March for HERS conference and walk at the American Memorial Park last Saturday. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

Kagman High School instructor Gerard Van Gil gives a presentation at the 2nd March for HERS conference and walk at the American Memorial Park last Saturday. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
Young men and women hold up the signs they created that represent "women empowerment" during the 2nd March for HERS conference and walk at the American Memorial Park last Saturday.



KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
The 2nd March for HERS conference and walk sparks activism in this young girl last Saturday at the American Memorial Park.

Women of all ages march in support of women empowerment during the 2nd March for HERS conference and walk at the American Memorial Park. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

High school civics contest to conclude April 1

Just a few weeks remain for young people in the CNMI to enter the 2018 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest, an essay and video competition offering substantial cash prizes and an opportunity to meet eminent jurists and legal practitioners.

The contest is open to students in grades 9-12 in public, private, and parochial schools or home- schooled students of equivalent grade status. The deadline for entries is 11:59pm Pacific time on April 1, 2018.

More information is available at http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest.

The theme of the contest is "The 14th Amendment 150 Years After Ratification: What Does Equal Protection Mean to Students?"

Students are challenged to write an essay or produce a video focusing on how Congress and the federal courts have applied the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment to public education, whether in admissions, classroom instruction or athletics.

The contest is cosponsored by the Courts and Community Committee of the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit and the federal courts in nine western states, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

A total of $7,000 in cash prizes will be awarded with the top three finishers in both the essay and video competitions receiving $2,000 for first place, $1,000 for second place, and $500 for third place.

The first-place winners, along with a parent or guardian, also will be invited to attend the 2108 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference in Anaheim, California.

The conference is an annual gathering of federal judges and lawyers who preside and practice in the federal courts. At least one U.S. Supreme Court justice typically participates in the conference and usually meets with the contest winners.

The U.S. District Court for the District of the Northern Mariana Islands will conduct a local contest to select finalists for the circuit competition. For more information about the local contest, contact Amanda Hayes at (670) 237-1230 or email amanda_hayes@nmid.uscourts.gov. ***(PR)***

Rota DPS promotes six officers

ROTA—The Rota Department of Public Safety promoted six police officers during a ceremony attended by the island's officials last Friday.

Rota Mayor Efrain Atalig said he is looking forward to seeing more officers get promoted in the future.

Pete Manglona was promoted from lieutenant to captain, while Sgt. Jonathan Garces is now a lieutenant. Police officers 3 Perry K. Mesngon and Tito S. Hocog II are now sergeants, while police officers 1 Joseph Q. Camacho and Elton Barcinas now have the rank of police officers 2.

One of those promoted said his new rank was much awaited.

"I was excited to get promoted, and I want to work with others with my new rank and be of assistance for the officers below who are in need of my help," said the official who requested that he not be named.

Rep. Glenn Maratita (R-Rota) said he is working on providing funds in support of DPS Rota operations.

Among those who joined the celebration were Rota DPS director Eusebio Manglona, current and retired police officers, DPS Rota staff, some members of the municipal council and the island's Cabinet members and their representatives. ***(Va'ina Lizama)***

Groups' bid to compel Navy, Defense denied

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona has denied the four environmental and preservation groups' motion for the court to enforce its February 2018 order that compels the U.S. Department of Navy and the U.S. Department of Defense to add four documents to the record in their lawsuit.

Manglona denied the motion to enforce without prejudice, saying she reviewed the groups' motion and authority therein, and considered how this case has proceeded, including the matters discussed at the Feb. 23, 2018 status conference.

Denial without prejudice means the judge did not give the groups' request for relief, but allowed them to re-file the motion at a later time.

The groups—the Tinian Women Association, Guardians of Gani, PaganWatch, and the Center for Biological Diversity—are suing the U.S. Navy, Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer, Defense, and Defense Secretary James Mattis over the Navy's decision to relocate 5,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam and to conduct live-training on Tinian and Pagan.

The groups are suing the defendants for alleged violation of the National Environmental Policy Act and Administrative Procedure Act.

The groups claim that Navy and DOD violated NEPA and APA by failing to consider the relocation efforts and potential construction of live-fire training ranges on Tinian and Pagan as "connected actions" in a single environmental impact statement.

In their motion to enforce, the groups have asked the court to enforce its February 2018 order that compels the Navy and Defense to add four documents to the record in their lawsuit over the Navy's decision to relocate 5,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam and to conduct live-training on Tinian and Pagan.

In their motion to enforce filed last Friday, the groups, through David L. Henkin of Earthjustice, and Kimberlyn K. King-Hinds, asked the court to order the Navy and DOD to begin the process of identifying, compiling, and reviewing the documents the court identified in its Feb. 12 order as needed to complete the administrative record in this case.

In her Feb. 12 order, Manglona ordered the Navy, Spencer, Defense, and Mattis to compete the administrative record within 30 days.

The four documents refer to the final training needs assessment dated April 2012 and revised in March 2013; final CNMI Joint Military Training Requirements and Siting Study dated January 2013 and revised March 2013; March 14, 2013, *Federal Register* notice announcing the Navy's intent to prepare the CNMI Joint Military Training; and the draft CNMI Joint Military Training EIS/overseas EIS dated April 2015. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Scheduled power outage on March 9 and 10

There will be a scheduled power interruption on Friday, March 9, and Saturday, March 10, from 6am to 11am.

The purpose of the power interruption is to de-energize primary lines and allow the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. line crew to safely replace eight 45-foot wooden poles with concrete poles along Chalan Pale Arnold Road on Lower Navy Hill.

The pole replacement task is a sub-project of the CUC Hazard Mitigation Project aimed at strengthening and hardening the power grid through the replacement of 787 wooden poles with concrete poles.

Since the commencement of the project, 338 of 787 wooden poles have been replaced.

The Lower Navy Hill area will be affected by this power outage but not water wells. The S-8 wastewater lift station will be affected.

Travelers commuting northbound and southbound on Chalan Pale Arnold Road in the area of Lower Navy Hill are asked to exercise caution when traveling through the working areas.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates. ***(CUC)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-18-010

MAUI 1 & 4 SHAFT WELLS MECHANICAL LIFT REHABILITATION PROJECT, SAIPAN

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified firms to design a method to rehabilitate the Maui 1 & 4 mechanical lifts; to rehabilitate the existing mechanical lifts and develop a safety plan for all required work in the shaft and tunnels in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from the above mentioned funding agencies.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one RFP package set. The RFP package consisting of the specifications and plans for the project, will be provided in a CD or emailed to the registered email ID. Prospective Proposers must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division.

A Pre-proposal Conference will be conducted at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room 17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan on **February 22, 2018 at 10:00 AM (ChST).** Immediately after the conference, a Site Visit to the Maui Shaft Wells facility will be conducted. Proposers shall familiarize themselves with the site conditions prior to submitting the proposal.

One (1) original and four (4) hard copies, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-RFP-18-010 Maui 1 & 4 Shaft Wells Mechanical Lift Rehabilitation Project, Saipan, CNMI"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **March 16, 2018 at 10:00 AM (ChST).** Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

A *Proposal Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total proposal price must accompany the proposals. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or proposal bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful Proposer. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Proposers are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion and revision of proposals, and such revision may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining the best and final offers. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.

All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Offeror are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the proponent awarded a contract. Successful proponents will be required to submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page: https://marianaslabor.net/. The proponents shall be required to comply with all applicable CNMI and Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 26, 2018** to Manny B. Sablan, Jr. CUC Purchasing Officer via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to CUC Water-Wastewater Engineer, Jake Parker via email address jake.parker@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, CUC Purchasing Assistant via email address Marcela.Tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, March 21, 2018
5:00 PM, Governor Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center, Susupe
Tel: 234-9661 • Fax: 234-9666 • www.zoning.gov.mp

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of 02/21/2018 meeting minutes
5. Public Comments (not related to files for discussion under item B. Public Hearings)

B. Public Hearings:
1. **Rezone Application #2018-0706:** Marianas General Clinic dba Marianas Specialty Referral Hospital/Pacific Fertility Institute is requesting to rezone Lots # EA 216-2-1, EA 216-3, EA 833-12, EA 833-13, EA 833-14-1, EA 833-14-R-1, & EA 833-20 in As Perdido (Mango Resort properties), from "Village Commercial" to "Mixed Commercial" zoning district to operate a full service inpatient hospital.
2. **Conditional Use Application #2018-0748:** Share View Travel Corporation is proposing to occupy 4 existing 2-storey structures and 1 maintenance building with a total of 18 units to operate a Bed & Breakfast establishment. This use is classified as "Bed & Breakfast" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 1625 NEW-9-R2 in Gualo Rai. This area is zoned as Village Residential.

C. Communication

D. Old Business: Board decisions on the following applications heard during the Public Hearing conducted on February 21, 2018:
1. Conditional Use Application #2017-3788: Jiang Zhen Group dba Shanghai Guest House. (Motel)
2. Conditional Use Application #2017-4598: Kuan Y. Leung dba KL Auto Shop. (Gas Station, Light Repair)
3. Conditional Use Application #2017-4958: Win Win Construction Co., (Saipan), Inc.. (Institutional Residential)

E. New Business
1. Operations Reports (Permitting & Enforcement/Public Hearing Procedures)
2. All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) – "Amusement, Outdoor"

F. Executive (Closed) Session

G. Miscellaneous
a. Other Matters
b. Announcements
c. Next Meeting

H. Adjourn

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact the Zoning Administrator, Therese T. Ogumoro, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Zoning Board Chairman

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

Why don't we study gun violence? Because it's against the law

President Donald Trump sounds interested—for now—in solving at least some of this country's gun problems in the wake of the mass shooting that left 17 students and educators dead in a Florida high school.

But the president has also seemed confused and misinformed about why previous efforts at gun regulation have failed, or even what "due process" means when taking firearms from those who are a danger to themselves or others.

Fortunately, he has a top-notch research agency that can study the problem in detail to establish evidence and information in support of solutions.

All the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention needs is governmental permission to resume research on guns, and protection from political influence.

It has been more than two decades since Congress passed the "Dickey amendment" in what was supposed to be an effort to keep the CDC neutral in the debate about gun control. But for the National Rifle Association, even a statement such as "having a gun in the house increases the chance of homicide" was too politically charged.

As a result, the CDC and other federal agencies were kept from studying the public health impacts of guns and offering ways that could prevent injuries or deaths. For example, the United States sees 30,000 gun deaths a year. More than half of those are suicides. Are there ways to prevent these deaths? How many lives might have been saved if we had the data and knowledge about gun violence that could have been accumulating for the last 20 years?

The 29-word amendment, approved in 1996 on Page 245 of a 750-page bill, and backed since then by gun industry lobbying, has had a lasting impact on American safety.

It says "none of the funds made available for injury prevention and control at the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention may be used to advocate or promote gun control."

U.S. Rep. Jay Dickey (R., Ark.), who died last year, told NPR in 2015 that he never meant for his amendment to cut off funding for research and that he came to regret that outcome.

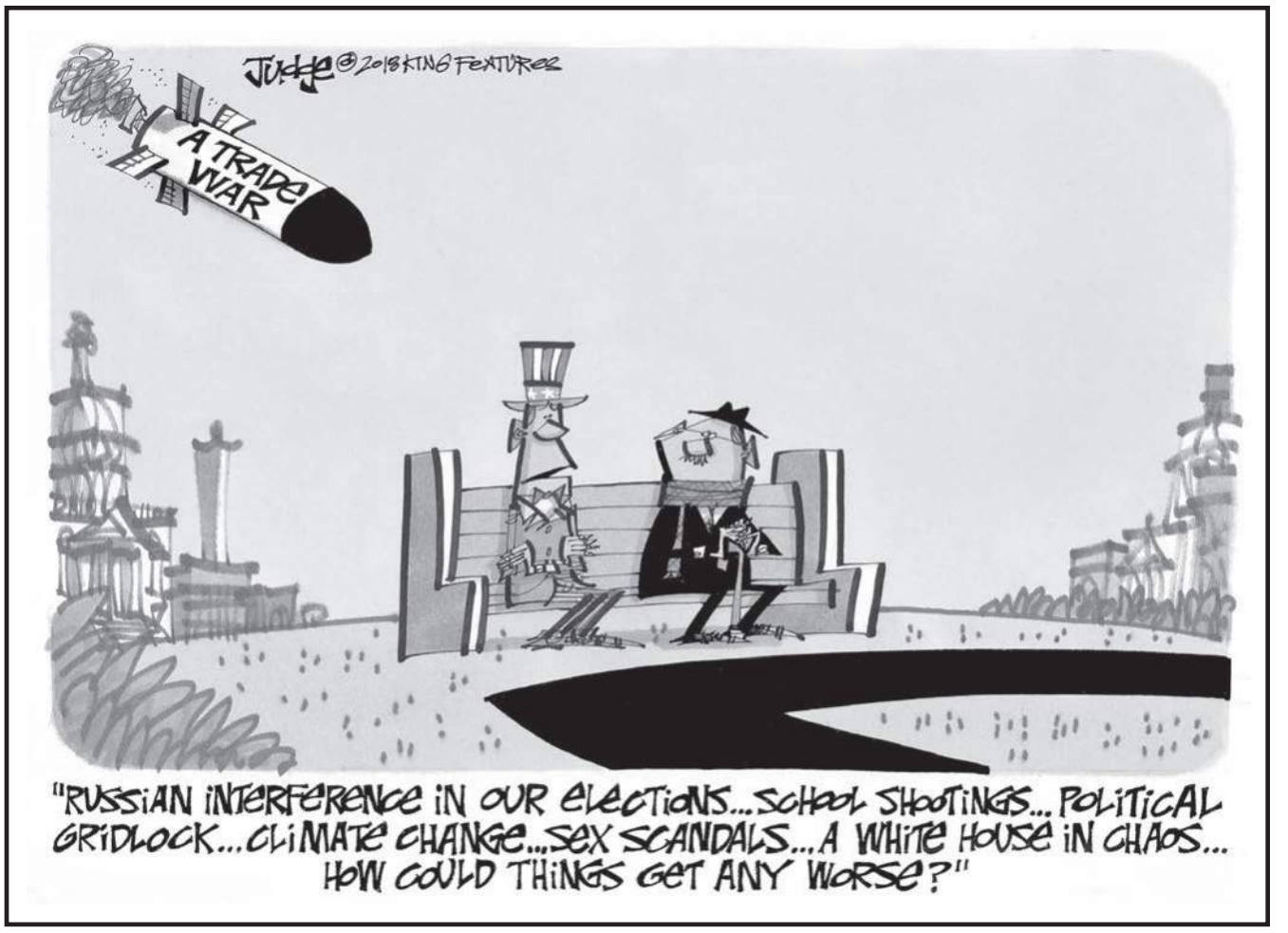
Trump sounded wide-open to new gun regulations during a meeting at the White House on Wednesday with members of Congress, making a series of suggestions that delighted Democrats and dismayed Republicans.

This would not be the first time the president has pulled this move—with the media broadcasting it live—only to upend any potential for a deal by completely shifting his stance. All signs point to a Trump double-cross coming on guns since, really, the only constant of his administration is uncertainty.

But in that—with Democrats and Republicans equally surprised by his sudden and seismic shifts in positions—there may be opportunity.

Poll after poll shows Americans are fed up with gun vio-

See WHY on Next Page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A TRADE WAR
"RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN OUR ELECTIONS...SCHOOL SHOOTINGS...POLITICAL GRIDLOCK...CLIMATE CHANGE...SEX SCANDALS...A WHITE HOUSE IN CHAOS... HOW COULD THINGS GET ANY WORSE?"

The unconscionable conflicts of Jared Kushner

By ROBERT B. REICH
Tribune News Service

Former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich is a professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of Aftershock: The Next Economy and America's Future. *He blogs at www.robertreich.org.*

Before I turn to Jared Kushner, let me ask: Do you believe the U.S. government does the right thing all or most of the time?

The Gallup organization started asking this question in 1963, when more than 70 percent of Americans said they did. Since then, the percentage has steadily declined. By 2016, before Donald Trump became president, only 16 percent of Americans said they did.

Why the decline? Surely various disappointments and scandals played a part—Vietnam, Watergate, Iran-Contra, "weapons of mass destruction," the Wall Street bailout.

But the largest factor by far has been the rise of big money in politics. Most people no longer believe their voices count.

Kushner

That view is backed by solid research. Princeton University professor Martin Gilens and Northwestern University professor Benjamin Page analyzed 1,799 policy issues that came before Congress and found "the preferences of the average American appear to have only a miniscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy."

Instead, Gilens and Page concluded, lawmakers respond to the policy demands of wealthy individuals and moneyed business interests—those with the most lobbying prowess and deepest pockets to bankroll campaigns.

It's likely far worse now. Gilens and Page's data came from 1981 to 2002, before the Supreme Court opened the floodgates to big money in its Citizens United and McCutcheon decisions.

Trump and Bernie Sanders—authoritarian populist and progressive populist, respectively—based their shockingly successful campaigns on the public's outrage at the corruption of our democracy by big money. Sanders called for a "political revolution." Trump promised to "drain the swamp."

Trump hasn't drained it, of course. He's turned the entire government into a giant bog of lobbyists, real estate moguls, Wall Streeters and billionaires.

Which brings us to Kushner, the putative swamp-drainer's son-in-law and adviser.

Kushner may yet be indicted in Robert Mueller's investigation. But it could turn out that Kushner's most significant contribution to the stench of this administration will come from his financial conflicts of interest.

When he took the White House job, Kushner chose not to follow the usual practice of wealthy people when they join administrations—putting their assets into blind trusts managed by outside experts.

Instead, Kushner retained control over the vast majority of his interest in Kushner Companies, worth as much as $761 million, according to government ethics filings.

So how has Kushner separated his business dealings from his dealings on behalf of the United States? He hasn't.

The New York Times reported last week that after the CEOs of Citigroup and Apollo Global Management attended White House meetings set up by Kushner, the two firms loaned the Kushner family business more than $500 million.

Furthermore, the Securities and Exchange Commission dropped an inquiry into Apollo Global Management after the company had granted the loan to the Kushner family business.

Last spring, Kushner's real-estate firm sought hundreds of millions of dollars directly from the Qatar government for its distressed property on Fifth Avenue in New York City, the Intercept reported. Soon after Qatar turned down the request, Kushner reportedly backed a diplomatic assault on Qatar that sparked a crisis continuing today.

Kushner is such an easy mark that officials in at least four countries have privately discussed ways to manipulate him with financial deals, U.S. officials told the Washington Post.

Kushner insists that he's done nothing wrong, and that there's no direct evidence he has profited from his position in the White House or put personal financial interests ahead of the interests of the American public.

But that's not the point. Conflicts of interest are always difficult to prove, which is why we have ethics rules to avoid even the appearance of such conflicts.

And it sure looks as if Kushner is using his White House perch to make money for himself, just as his father-in-law is.

It's as bad for a government official to look as if he's lining his pockets as it is for him to actually do so, because the appearance of corruption undermines public trust just as readily as the real thing. And trust is what distinguishes an advanced democracy from a banana republic.

But Trump and the family members he's brought into his White House don't give a hoot about public trust. They have ut-

See KUSHNER on Next Page

Primet leksion

Man-suette i man-mafana`gue finu` Chamorro gi primet yan segundu gradu antes. Ayu ha` chiña i tinaitai yan tutuhun madiletran finu` Chamorro.

Dispues, todu para mona finu` Eñglis. Enfin, manatma ditetminasion-hu umeyag kabales i matuge` na patte gi liñguahi-hu. Kulan nesessidat todu dos kanai para umauleg maseha haf` tachochogue.

Hu tutuhun manaitai lepblun nobena, trinansladan biblia, yan disision kotte para bai li`e usun yan mapegan palabra gi papet. Taya` guihe na tiempu maestron matuge` na finu` Chamorro.

Mas ha soyu`yu` mañgge` ayu mina` hu birayu` tatte ya hu tutuhun mañga`guas gi hila` nana-hu. Umafagcha` este (40 años dispues) yan sineda` professot pasifiku siha pot liñguahe ni sumoyu` finana`guen matuge` na finu` natibu.

Guaha `nai fatigau-yu` mañgge` lau pot manatatte na famaguonta na sige ha` hu suhun lapeshu. Puede benefisiosu i kontribusion-hu manala`la` hila` nana-ta. Este na attura `nai hu sosoda` ginefsagaghu `an sige hu pula` haf` siha man-mehnalum na finu` mañaina-ta. Suanu na palabras ni tatnai huhuñgog pa`gu na tiempu.

Konbetsa: I hechuran konbetsasion na finu` Chamorro i ti mapot na patte gi liñguahi-ta. Taya` fotmalidat mapega pot usun liñguahe gi fina` hunta. Mientras guaha inakomprende gi haf` man-madiskukute siha na asuntu siempre u felis i dineskuten asuntu siha.

`Nai mattu hau gi matuge` na finu` Chamorro, fuetsau humalum areglun usun dinanche na grammatika, areglun palabra, señat tat kumu coma, yan areglun usun propiu palabra. Poresu na i para u fañge` debi finenina u komprende i asuntu kabales para u siña umesplika i tinige`ña gi komprendiyun na attura. Gai fotmalidat este i mañgge` ayu mina` mas mapot ke konbetsasion.

Matuge` liñguahi-ta i solu sahyan `nai ma`udai halum i kutturan i tautau gi fitme na pisu. Ha signifikia na yangin i patgon siña ha tuge` hila` nanaña pues klaru na ha komprende i liñguahiña mismu.

Kanset: Hu huñgog guine gi alacha na kumahulu` i numeron tautau-ta ni man-nina`ye kanset. Esta namanman dispues hu asimula haf` este siha na chinatsaga. Ha inklusu kanset pachot, guetgueru, susu, matris yan gofes. I kanset pachot gaige na sumigugundu.

I satbasion gaige gi para ta suhaye todu bisiu ni dañosu. Taya` rason na para ta usa sigariyu `sino otru traidot na attikulu. Mientras mas un` chagu`e mas hau libre ginen pipinu` na chenot kanset.

Hu huñgog lokue` na gi nubenta na tautau-ta ni man-estaba Guam guine gi mapos na semana, mayotmente pot chenot kanset. Gaige obligasion inadahe giya hagu mismu. Fana`gue lokue` famaguon haf` mauleg na pinetsige pot hinemlu` niha.

Yine`ase`: Trabiha taya` atparehuña natibu gi bandan yine`ase` yan pininiti. Pot ihemplo: `nai mabisita i kumeke matai na malañgu gi ICU mapacha papa` dispues mafaisen "Mamauleg ha?" Yangin mauleg i malañgu u gaige mohon gi ICU?

Dispues, man-huyuñg ya masañgane i familia, "Ta aksepta ha`!" Kulan mohon gi tumohgeña gi halum ICU kumonbetsasion yan i Saina ya matagu` para unotisia i familia na una` fañgonfotme siha. Haf` mohon? Diberas!

Sensia: Teñga hu dandan suabe na piano `sino gitala para una katma hinasog-hu mientras hu tataitai siha i gaseta gi taftaf oga`an. Ha sedeyu` umanalisa haf` i asuntu yan presentasion ideu ginen todu atmos banda.

Nachatsaga para ta soda` na i rumepresesenta hit gi lehislatura ti makomprende konseptun "supremu na lai" segun USPL 94-241. Estague` inakonfotman i Covenant. Todu maprebeniye kontodu pot relasion-ta yan federat. Puru che`chu` kinibrutu! Diberas! Haf` mohon na taiguine este?

Famaguon: I amot binenu (shabu shabu) yan otru mafanana`an "opioid", amot para puti kulan ma-offisiona usuña ni famaguon na tiempu. Yangin ti ma-ataha i patgon ginen este na binenu pues siempre hahatme che`chu` man-aña (violence) pat mas seriosu na che`chu` kriminat.

Debi i dos saina u sattun gi todu aktibidat famaguon niha para u listu lumi`e haye kulan inipus matulaika desde palabraña esta haf` ha petsisige diariu. I patgon ha nesessita ayudu `an enfin humalum guine na chatche`chu`. Obligasion-ta umesgaihon siha ginen este na tinailaye. Mauleg malistuye pot futtunan famaguon-ta.

Peska: I tasin sanhalum (laguna) entalu` Oleai yan Garapan lugat peskan panag antes gi lalahen mame Lali Fo`. Sessu gi lemlem tautau yan uttimun semana man-panag para usun familia. Ti man-malefa ni kustumbren makana` guihan gi troñku para i man-mofo`na na peskadot.

Pa`gu na biahe huli`e este na modun peska ginen i chagu`. Manhanau esta para i deskansun niha ayu siha na tropan peskadot. Kase machule` hanau este na modun peska hombre tatnai tali`e na tiempu. Tinayuyot para siha pot mauleg yan grasiosiu na amesta antes.

Asme: `An monhayan magugan i mai`es, entre mamulinu para atmayas pat guleg para titiyas `sino ma-asme para usun dispues. Este hagas kustumbre `nai metgot i che`chu` fangualu`an gi natibu. Kulan maliñgu este na tiempu pot hasan esta i tautau-ta man-gualu`.

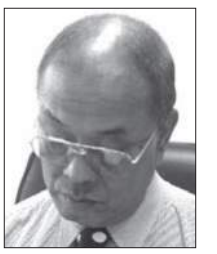
Presetbasion neñkanu` entre matala`, ha`me, pa`gu `an guiha, ma-asnentukun. Macho`gue antes pot appenas ice box. Gi hinalum este na traste hasan lokue` tali`e este na modun presetbasion. Debi hagu mismu un` chogue manala` `sino man-ha`me gi kusinan sanhiyuñg.

Mercedarian: Kase nobenta años tatte, man-mattu i primet na grupon madren Mercedarian guine. Gi hilu` pinepble ha dopbla siha umekstende ayudu gi mas mammopble na tautau-ta. Dañkulu na sakrifisiu mas ke haf` siña ta deskribe pot kinimiten sattun na kilisyanu.

Dañkulu na saludu para siha pot gi hilu` pinasensia manmafana`gue hit dottrinan i Saina desde ayu na tiempu. Dos gi halum siha umayudayu` gi karerahu: Sister Madre Pia yan Sister Mary Louise. Maseha esta man-hanau este siha na maestrag-hu, tatnai fatta gi tinayuyot-hu agradesimientu pot pinasensian niha gi todu leksion relihion Katoliku.

Si Sister Pia i tumuge` kanta-ta "Hagu Inan I Lañget" un` ma`ug na sunidu gi tautau-ta. Si Sister Mary Louise i numa`eyu` klaru na esplikasion dottrinan I Saina. Gi hilu` pinasensia ha fana`gue manadan famaguon-ta guihe na tiempu. U felis hinanau miyu yan Si Yuus Maase`!

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune



John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune.

How Republicans will run Congress in 2018

Republicans ended the first session of the 115th Congress with an enormous amount of leftover work. And that work might preoccupy them until March if they extend the Jan. 19 deadline for funding the government. But how will they operate when they finally get around to this year's business? Here are the lessons from 2017 that are most likely to define the new session of Congress.

They've divorced reconciliation from budgeting.

Political analyst Yuval Levin says this has been true "for some time," but that's not quite right. Republicans didn't entirely disregard the normal fiscal year budgeting process of passing "budget" resolutions that lead to reconciliation bills—the procedure that allows a bill to avoid filibuster in the Senate—until 2017. Then last year they actually passed two budget resolutions, one to enable reconciliation for the health care bill and one for the tax bill, but didn't get around to dealing with regular government spending until ... well, they haven't actually done it yet. It turns out that just because something is called a budget resolution, and was invented by legislation called the Budget Act, doesn't mean that it has to actually contain a budget that Congress then uses to allocate spending.

What this will mean in practical terms is that Republicans will probably hold off on attempting to pass a "budget" resolution until they figure out what their big bill for the year will be, and then quickly pass one to enable a reconciliation bill that would attempt to pass that bill. Republicans who eventually had major problems with one of the reconciliation bills in 2017 didn't attempt to kill them by killing the budget resolution.

They won't let the details stop them. Even major details.

Republicans were willing to support health care and tax legislation that was unusually poorly constructed. This isn't some partisan potshot—virtually all experts, including those who supported the general direction of the bills, agree. Republican-aligned interest groups didn't appear to care very much either. That likely makes Medicare reform or infrastructure easier to pass, but less likely to actually work as intended.

They don't really care what Donald Trump says.

While they often say nice things about him, Congressional Republicans spent 2017 ignoring his priorities and focusing instead on what they wanted to do, assuming that he would—at the very least—sign whatever they put on his desk. That doesn't mean the president's promises of a border wall, infrastructure, and overhauled trade deals are doomed—after all, some Republicans support those ideas. But Trump is one of the weakest presidents in modern times, and even strong ones have trouble imposing their will on Congress.

They have no interest at all in bipartisanship.

Individual Republican members may be willing to work with Democrats, and when they have no choice Republican leaders will work with the other party. But when they do have a choice, Republicans appear to prefer outright failure to bipartisan success. Nor are they willing to go through the motions of attempted bipartisanship, as Democrats were on health care in 2009, in order to provide cover to moderates who want to be able to say that a partisan bill was the only option.

The GOP's majority is smaller, and so may be their ambitions.

Fifty-one Republican Senators may simply not have the votes for major legislation. And it's certainly possible some members will change their behavior in an election year. They also may have changing preferences over the course of the year, depending on when their state's primary elections are held—with the increasing group of retiring Republican members perhaps freed from electoral constraints at all.

If I had to guess, I'd say that we're most likely to see a flurry of minor, feel-good measures surviving both houses of Congress. Then again, if they believe this will be the last unified Republican government for a while, some party actors will argue: Why not use it?

By JONATHAN BERNSTEIN
Bloomberg View

Jonathan Bernstein is a Bloomberg View columnist. He taught political science at the University of Texas at San Antonio and DePauw University and wrote A Plain Blog About Politics.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Heartfelt thanks to Rep. Barcinas

When told that our neighborhood had inadvertently been left out of the Saipan street naming project, and despite our not even being in his precinct, Rep. Donald Barcinas worked selflessly and tirelessly to shepherd through passage of the local legislation (House Local Bill 20-22) necessary to name our two little, forgotten streets. As a result, emergency and other service providers will now find it far easier to find us, which is no small issue when you consider that our neighborhood has a significant number of elderly and disabled people.

A warm and humble *si yuus maase* to you, Rep. Donald C. Barcinas. You are the best kind of public servant, one that helps constituents for the simple reason that it is the right thing to do. The people of the CNMI are fortunate to have you representing our interests. A special thank you is also due to Mr. Henry Hofschneider of the Saipan Mayor's Office and to Gov. Ralph Torres for signing the legislation into law. This small but worthwhile public project would not have happened without you all working together in support.

Sean Frink
As Mahettok, Saipan

WHY

From Page 10

lence and, after each massacre call for our elected leaders to act on the problem.

Six members of the House have written to Speaker Paul Ryan, asking him to take up legislation to repeal the Dickey amendment. That's what Dickey would have wanted. Ryan should respect that and act, allowing the repression of scientific study in an important area of public health to finally come to an end.

(c)2018 *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

KUSHNER

From Page 10

ter contempt for the common good. Government ethics officials have compared Trump's administration to a game of Whac-a-Mole—go after one potential violation, and others pop up.

Perhaps Kushner tells himself that the American public is already so cynical about big money's takeover of our democracy that his own apparent (or real) conflicts are chicken feed by comparison.

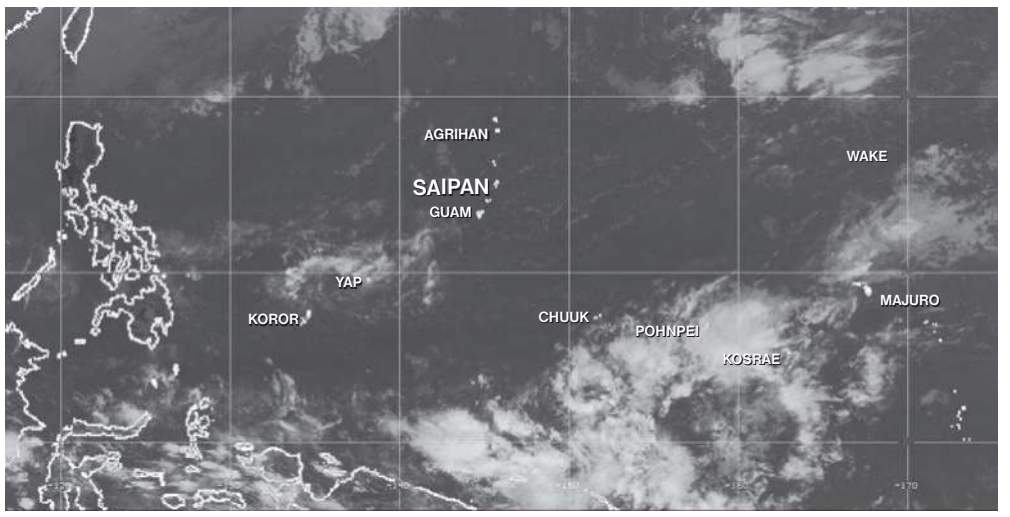
Which may be true. But by adding to the distrust, Kushner is doing his own bit to destroy American democracy—actions almost as treasonous as if he colluded with Russians to make his father-in-law president.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Mostly sunny with a slight chance of showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy. A slight chance of showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy.	Partly cloudy.	Partly cloudy.
▲89° ▼77°	▲89° ▼77°	▲89° ▼77°	▲89° ▼77°	▲89° ▼77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:00 AM, TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2018
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Marianas are once again locked in a dry-season trade-wind pattern after the brief interlude of the trade-wind disturbance yesterday, which primarily affected Guam. Precipitable water values are around 1.5 inches now, but will be approximately half that by Thursday in the GFS predictions. It will take until next Tuesday for them to fully recover to normal values. Refreshed the latest winds and waves, the only major change was the shear line past day 7. The new run was not nearly as bullish so our wind speeds ended up being 7 knots lower. That far out, it seemed the more conservative forecast was a good way to go. Winds and seas are diminishing, and are expected to continue this trend. Enjoy the good weather, should be great for boating and other water activities.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	85° / 75°
Palau	Thunderstorm	85° / 77°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	84° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	84° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	83° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	83° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	84° / 79°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	77° / 64°
Beijing	Sunny	48° / 23°
Hong Kong	Showers	64° / 54°
Honolulu	Windy	78° / 69°
London	Showers	48° / 37°
Los Angeles	Mostly Cloudy	73° / 52°
Manila	Thunderstorm	91° / 77°
Melbourne	Sunny	84° / 55°
Miami	Thunderstorm	82° / 60°
New York	Mixed	39° / 34°
Osaka	Rain	54° / 52°
Paris	Showers	48° / 37°
Busan	Rain	52° / 39°
Rome	Thunderstorm	55° / 43°
Salem	Sunny	58° / 34°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	62° / 51°
Seoul	Rain	45° / 30°
Tokyo	Rain	46° / 45°
Washington, DC	Showers	45° / 32°

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
5:22 AM	LOW TIDE	0.68
11:05 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.82
6:07 PM	LOW TIDE	0.30
12:19 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.55

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:30 AM	6:25 PM
Thursday	6:29 AM	6:25 PM
Friday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM
Saturday	6:28 AM	6:26 PM
Sunday	6:27 AM	6:26 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	10:14 am	11:09 pm
Thursday	-	10:58 am	-
Friday	12:00 am	11:42 pm	-
Saturday	12:50 am	12:28 pm	-
Sunday	1:39 am	1:15 pm	-

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 19, 2017

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA6394	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA6392	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA6391	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA6390	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA6398	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA6396	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA6391	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA6391	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:15pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:10am	6:10am	1, 7
7C3451	4:00am	7:05am	4, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

TW308	2:00am	6:05am	Daily
OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
LJ652	3:40am	7:30am	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403	4:45am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	5:40am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

JD396	7:30am	12:00pm	1
JD396	4:50pm	10:00pm	4

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	10:55am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:55am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6394/191	4:15am	9:00am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	8:10am	7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via GUM
UA6398/183	6:05pm	9:40pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA6398/183	6:05pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6398/193	6:05pm	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX077	1:50am	5:15am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:45am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7
UA6398/159	6:05pm	11:00pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA6393	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA6395	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA6391	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA6390	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA6397	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA6399	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA6390	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA6390	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:00pm	2:10am+1	4
7C3452	9:05pm	2:10am+1	3, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	9:30am	3:00pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
TW307	7:45pm	1:00am+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
LJ651	9:10pm	2:40am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:20pm	4:30am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

JD395	8:25am	3:30pm	4
JD395	9:55pm	5:00am+1	7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:25pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA182/6395	12:40am	8:05am	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/6397	9:55am	5:35pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:25pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:25pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/UA6395	10:05pm	8:05am+1	Daily via GUM
UA192/6395	10:30pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via ROR-GUM
UA184/6395	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:15pm	12:15am+1	3, 7
UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6
UA116/6395	11:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, LJ Jin Air, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, PR PAL Express; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The* Saipan Tribune *is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

Hopwood rules Leadership Corps cadet challenge

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Hopwood Middle School Leadership Corps dominated in the 2nd Annual Middle School Leadership Corps Cadet Challenge last Saturday.

Aside from placing first overall, Admiral Herbert G. Hopwood Junior High School students also bested over 30 other participating students in the top male and female categories.

The annual Middle School Leadership Corps Cadet Challenge is a CNMI-wide cadet challenge where five cadets from each middle school's Leadership Corps is selected to take on a set of obstacles that are supposed to demonstrate resilience and grit.

Throughout the day, each team was required to complete a series of obstacles. The obstacles, in no particular order, was the pull up/flex arm, sit ups, stretching, and shuttle run. At the end of the challenge, every participating student conducted a one-mile run together.

The obstacles were created with the intent to push the students past their comfort zones and to initiate leadership skills and team building skills in every participant.

According to Bobby Cruz, acting associate commissioner for Student and Support Services, he is proud to support the cadet challenge competition because students get to practice and showcase what it means to be resilient, to persevere, and to be great young leaders.

The top female cadet, Pauline Joyce, an eight-grader at Hopwood, said she was shocked and excited that all her hard work in training for the event paid off.

Top male cadet, Justice Ngewako, another eight-grader at Hopwood, said the journey to achieving his accomplishment was hard and exhausting but it was well worth it.

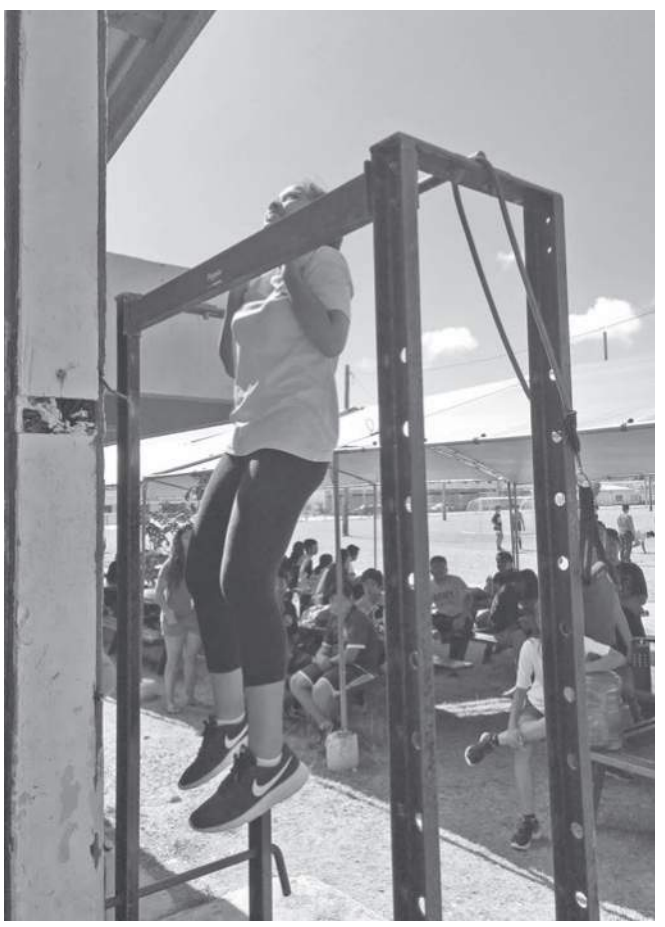
Hopwood cadets left all the other schools in the dust with an overall percentile score of 68. The percentage was tabulated by summing up all the points each student was given from each obstacle and dividing it by five.

Coming in second was Francisco M. Sablan Junior High School with a score of 57 percentile overall. Completing the top three was Rota High School/Junior High School with a 54.5 percentile score.

Seven public middle schools participated in the 2nd Annual Leadership Corps cadet challenge championship CNMI-wide last Saturday at the Admiral Herbert G. Junior High School. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

A student from Tinian Middle School attempts to complete the pull-up obstacle at the 2nd Annual Leadership Corps cadet challenge championship CNMI-wide last Saturday at the Admiral Herbert G. Junior High School. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

Students from various middle schools perform as many sit-ups as they can at the 2nd Annual Leadership Corps cadet challenge championship last Saturday at the Admiral Herbert G. Junior High School. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA



A student from the Admiral Herbert G. Junior High School attempts to complete the pull-up obstacle at the 2nd Leadership Corps cadet challenge championship last Saturday at the Admiral Herbert G Junior High School. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

The winning Leadership Corps school, Admiral Herbert G. Hopwood Junior High School, pose for a photo with their trophy at the 2nd Leadership Corps cadet challenge championship last Saturday at the Admiral Herbert G Junior High School. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

The top male and female cadets of the Leadership Corps cadet challenge pose for a photo at the 2nd Leadership Corps cadet challenge championship last Saturday at the Admiral Herbert G Junior High School. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

A student completes the stretching obstacle at the 2nd Leadership Corps cadet challenge championship last Saturday at the Admiral Herbert G. Junior High School. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

Participants of the 2nd Leadership Corps cadet challenge championship pose for a photo last Saturday at the Admiral Herbert G. Junior High School. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

Business

Trump's boasts aside, trade wars typically leave no victors

WASHINGTON (AP)—Trade wars generate no medals, monuments or military parades. But they do tend to leave a lot of economic wreckage, often hurt the very people they're meant to help and can fracture diplomatic relations among allies.

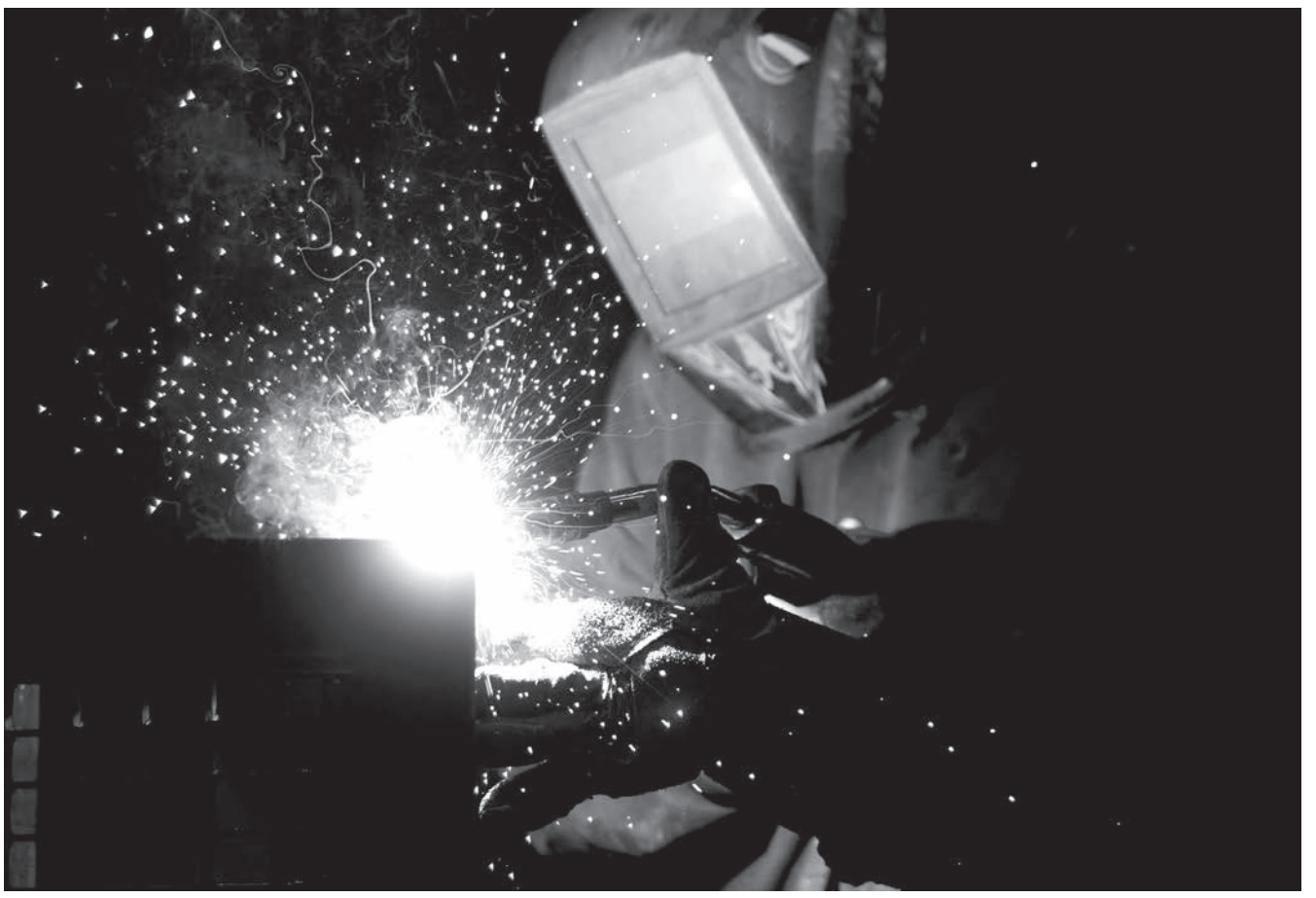
After announcing plans last week to slap taxes on imported aluminum and steel, President Donald Trump called trade wars "good" and breezily forecast an "easy" victory for the United States.

Economists see it rather differently. Starting a fight with trading partners has mostly proved to be self-defeating, they note.

"Usually, all sides lose in a trade war," says Douglas Irwin, a Dartmouth College economist and author of the just-published "Clashing Over Commerce: A History of U.S. Trade Policy." ''Trade shrinks as countries pile on barriers in an effort to remedy some grievance, with consumers paying the price."

Wall Street clearly agrees. Stocks sank Thursday and Friday after Trump announced plans to slap tariffs of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum imports, effectively threatening to wage commercial war on U.S. trading partners from Brasilia to Berlin to Beijing.

Shares of some of America's biggest exporters—Boeing, Deere, Caterpillar—fell hardest on fears that other countries would retaliate against U.S. products.



AP

A welder fabricates a steel structure at an iron works facility in Ottawa, Ontario, Monday, March 5, 2018. President Donald Trump insisted Monday that he's "not backing down" on his plan to impose stiff tariffs on imported steel and aluminum despite anxious warnings from House Speaker Paul Ryan and other congressional Republicans of a possible trade war.

The term "trade war" is usually tossed around when countries spar over commerce, often without a clear sense of what it is. Eswar Prasad, professor of trade policy at Cornell University, defines it as a series of "escalating tit-for-tat trade barriers imposed on each other by two or more countries."

Edward Alden, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, says the world hasn't endured a full-blown trade war since the 1930s. But globally, war drums are beating again.

Europeans have threatened to retaliate against Trump's metals tariffs by targeting American blue jeans, bourbon and Harley-Davidson motorcycles. It may not be a coincidence that Harleys are produced in House Speaker Paul Ryan's Wisconsin and bourbon in Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's Kentucky.

Trump has met Europe's threat of retaliation with a piled-on threat of his own: To slap tariffs on European autos.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada, which stands to suffer most from Trump's proposed steel and aluminum tariffs, warned that he was prepared to "defend Canadian industry" from the tariffs.

China has responded to earlier Trump-imposed trade sanctions—tariffs on imported solar panels and washing machines—by launching an anti-dumping investigation into U.S. sorghum exports, a move seen as a warning shot at American farmers who depend heavily on trade.

China, after all, consumes a third of the soybeans American farmers produce. John Heisdorffer, president of the American Soybean Association, warned that a Chinese retaliation to Trump's tariffs "would be devastating to U.S. soy growers. Our competitors in Brazil and Argentina are all too happy to pick up supplying the Chinese market."

Though full-blown trade wars are mostly destined to fail, countries can sometimes pressure their trading partners to change their ways, Alden says. With U.S. automakers reeling from Japanese competition in the 1980s, the Reagan administration strong-armed Japan into agreeing to "voluntary export restraints" on car shipments. Japanese automakers ended up moving factories to the United States to avoid the limits.

But shielding one domestic industry from foreign competition can hurt others by driving up prices. A study by NERA Economic Consulting found that a 7 percent aluminum tariff—less than what the administration is planning—would save 1,000 jobs annually in the aluminum industry but wipe out 22,600 other jobs across the U.S. economy.

Republicans want Trump to back off his tariff proposal

WASHINGTON (AP)—In a remarkably public confrontation, House Speaker Paul Ryan and other Republican allies of President Donald Trump pleaded with him Monday to back away from his threatened international tariffs, which they fear could spark a dangerous trade war. Trump retorted: "We're not backing down."

The president said U.S. neighbors Canada and Mexico would not be spared from his plans for special import taxes on steel and aluminum, but he held out the possibility of later exempting the longstanding friends if they agree to better terms for the U.S. in talks aimed at revising the North American Free Trade Agreement.

"We've had a very bad deal with Mexico; we've had a very bad deal with Canada. It's called NAFTA," he declared.

Trump spoke shortly after a spokeswoman for Ryan, a Trump ally, said the GOP leader was "extremely worried" that the proposed tariffs would set off a trade war and urged the White House "to not advance with this plan."

Likewise, Republican leaders of the House Ways and Means Committee circulated a letter opposing Trump's plan, and GOP congressional leaders suggested they may attempt to prevent the tariffs if the president moves forward.

Trump's pledge to implement tariffs of 25 percent on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminum imports has roiled financial markets, angered foreign allies and created unusual alliances for a president who blasted unfavorable trade deals during his 2016 campaign. Union leaders and Democratic lawmakers from Rust Belt states have praised the planned tariffs, joining with advocates within the administration including Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and White House trade adviser Peter Navarro.

But the president has been opposed internally by Defense Secretary James Mattis and White House economic adviser Gary Cohn, who warned against penalizing U.S. allies and undercutting the economic benefits of the president's sweeping tax overhaul.

Likewise, the statement from Ryan's office said, "The new tax reform law has boosted the economy, and we certainly don't want to jeopardize those gains."

Asked about that public rebuke, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said, "Look, we have a great relationship with Speaker Ryan. We're going to continue to have one, but that doesn't mean we have to agree on everything."

Canada is the United States' No. 1 foreign supplier of both steel and aluminum. Mexico is the No. 4 supplier of steel and No. 7 for aluminum.

Congressional Republicans say any tariffs should be narrow in scope, and they privately warned that Trump's effort could hurt the party's hopes to preserve its majority in the fall elections.

As the president dug in on his position, any potential compromise with foreign trading partners and Republican lawmakers was expected to still include some form of tariffs.

Washington becomes 1st state to approve net-neutrality rules

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP)—Washington became the first state Monday to set up its own net-neutrality requirements after U.S. regulators repealed Obama-era rules that banned internet providers from blocking content or interfering with online traffic.

"We know that when D.C. fails to act, Washington state has to do so," Gov. Jay Inslee said before signing the measure that lawmakers passed with bipartisan support. "We know how important this is."

As he has done frequently over the past year, Inslee took aim at President Donald Trump's administration, saying the decision by the Federal Communications Commission was "a clear case of the Trump administration favoring powerful corporate interests over the interests of millions of Washingtonians and Americans."

The FCC voted in December to gut U.S. rules that meant to prevent broadband companies such as Comcast, AT&T and Verizon from exercising more control over what people watch and see on the internet. The regulations also prohibited providers from favoring some sites and apps over others.

Because the FCC prohibited state laws from contradicting its decision, opponents of the Washington law have said it would lead to lawsuits.

Inslee said he was confident of its legality, saying "the states have a full right to protect their citizens."

The new law also requires internet providers to disclose information about their management practices, performance and commercial terms. Violations would be enforceable under the state's Consumer Protection Act.

While several states introduced similar measures this year seeking to protect net neutrality, so far only Oregon and Washington have passed legislation. But Oregon's measure wouldn't put any new requirements on internet providers.

It would stop state agencies from buying internet service from any company that blocks or prioritizes specific content or apps, starting in 2019. It's unclear when Oregon's measure would be signed into law.

Washington state was among more than 20 states and the District of Columbia that sued in January to try and block the FCC's action. There are also efforts by Democrats to undo the move in Congress.

Governors in five states—Hawaii, New Jersey, New York, Montana and Vermont—have signed executive orders related to net-neutrality issues, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Montana's order, for instance, bars telecommunications companies from receiving state contracts if they interfere with internet traffic or favor higher-paying sites or apps.

Nation

Florida Senate passes bill to put restrictions on gun sales

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP)—In response to a deadly Florida school shooting last month, the state's Senate narrowly passed a bill Monday that would create new restrictions on rifle sales and allow some teachers to carry guns in schools.

The 20-18 vote came after three hours of often emotional debate. Support and opposition crossed party lines, and it was clear many of those who voted for the bill weren't entirely happy with it.

"Do I think this bill goes far enough? No! No, I don't!" said Democratic Sen. Lauren Book, who tearfully described visiting Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School after 17 people were fatally shot on Valentine's Day.

She also would have liked a ban on assault-style rifles, like many of the students who traveled to the state Capitol to ask lawmakers to go even further to stop future mass shootings. But Book said she couldn't let the legislative session end Friday without doing something.

"My community was rocked. My school children were murdered in their classrooms. I cannot live with a choice to put party politics above an opportunity to get something done that inches us closer to the place I believe we should be as a state," she said. "This is the first step in saying never again."

AP

Florida Sen. Lauren Book, right, embraces Sen. Bill Galvano after Galvano's bill, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Student Safety Act, passed 20-18 at the Florida Capitol in Tallahassee, Fla., Monday, March 5, 2018.

Earlier Monday, families of the 17 Florida high school massacre victims called on the state's Legislature to pass a bill they believe will improve school security.

Reading a statement outside Stoneman Douglas High School in Broward County, Ryan Petty implored legislators to pass Gov. Rick Scott's proposal to add armed security guards, keep guns away from the mentally ill and improve mental health programs for at-risk teens. Scott also opposes arming teachers.

"We must be the last families to lose loved ones in a mass shooting at a school. This time must be different and we demand action," said Petty, reading from the group statement.

Petty's 14-year-old daughter, Alaina, was killed in the Feb. 14 shooting, along with 13 schoolmates and three staff members.

If just one more senator voted no instead of yes Monday evening, the bill would have died. Republicans and Democrats alike said there were parts of the bill they didn't like. Democrats didn't like the idea of letting teachers carry guns, even if the bill was amended to water down that proposed program. And many pro-gun rights Republicans didn't like the idea of raising the minimum age to buy rifles from 18 to 21 and to create a waiting period on sales of the weapons.

The Senate amended its bill to limit which teachers could volunteer to go through law enforcement training and carry guns in schools. Any teacher who does nothing but work in a classroom would not be eligible for the program, but teachers who perform other duties, such as serving as a coach, and other school employees could still participate. Other exceptions would be made for teachers who are current or former law enforcement officers, members of the military or who teach in a Junior Reserve Officer's Training Corps program.

The bill would name the program for slain assistant football coach Aaron Feis, who has been hailed as a hero for shielding students during the school attack. The 37-year-old graduated from Stoneman Douglas in 1999 and worked mainly with the junior varsity, living in nearby Coral Springs with his wife and daughter. Republican Sen. Bill Galvano said he asked for and received the approval of Feis' family to name the program for him.

Oregon governor signs first gun law since Florida massacre

SALEM, Ore. (AP)—A bill prohibiting domestic abusers and people under restraining orders from owning firearms became America's first new gun control law since the Feb. 14 Florida high school massacre.

"Well done Oregon," Democratic Gov. Kate Brown exclaimed Monday after signing the law on the steps of the state Capitol as some 200 people, including victims of domestic abuse and high school students, applauded and cheered.

State Sen. Floyd Prozanski, whose sister was fatally shot by her boyfriend, and Rep. Janeen Sollman, who fled her home as a child when her father was in a violent rage, hugged as they stood behind the governor.

The shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, that killed 17 people has created a wave of young anti-gun activists that has now reached cross-country into Oregon. Students from a high school in the Portland suburb of Lake Oswego traveled 40 miles (65 kilometers) to stage a gun-control rally in the state capital, Salem, Monday morning.

"We are empowered youth," they chanted, while holding signs that read "End gun violence, our lives matter," and "Together we can end gun violence."

"We want to promote change. We're tired of the massive number of school shootings and the massive lack of action," said 15-year-old student Eli Counce.

Scarlett Scott-Buck, another student, said she came to protest "because I'm scared to attend my own school. And I'm here to be an activist for my rights—to live, my friends' rights to live, and my mother's fear."

Brown came down from her office to speak to the more than 100 students from Lakeridge High School in Lake Oswego, who sat on a broad stairway underneath the Capitol rotunda. She urged those who are 18 to register to vote.

"You want what?" she asked them.

"Change," they shouted in unison.

"How do you make change?" Brown asked.

"Vote!" the students shouted.

A couple of hours later, Brown met in her office with a dozen students from different schools. They agreed more needs to be done, including expanded access to mental health counseling to prevent unstable students from reaching the breaking point and committing violence.

But some students said gun control is also needed.

ACROSS THE NATION

California to fight ruling on early parole for sex offenders

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—California said Monday that it will fight a judge's ruling ordering the state to consider earlier parole for potentially thousands of sex offenders, such as those convicted of raping an unconscious person. Gov. Jerry Brown's administration will appeal the order by Sacramento County Superior Court Judge Allen Sumner, said Vicky Waters, spokeswoman for the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The judge previously said in a tentative ruling that prison officials must rewrite part of the parole regulations in a ballot measure passed by voters in 2016. No inmates will be released while the appeal is underway, Waters said. She said in a statement that the ruling "does not reflect the intent of California's voters who approved Proposition 57 by a 2-to-1 margin." The ballot measure allows earlier parole for most state inmates as a way of reducing the prison population, but the Democratic governor promised voters that all sex offenders would be excluded.

Mom, son die after being buried in snow by California condo

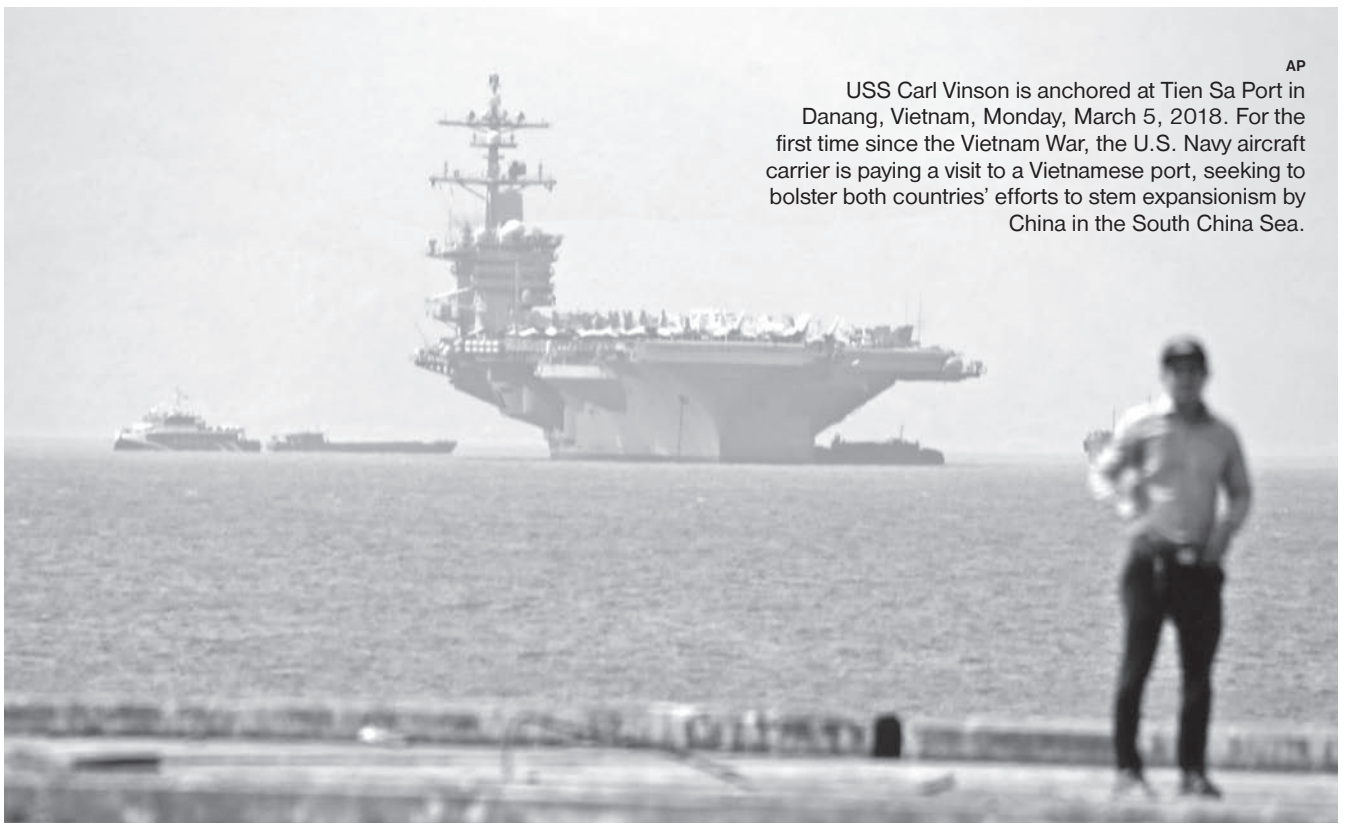
KIRKWOOD, Calif. (AP)—A mother and her 7-year-old son died after they were discovered buried under snow just feet from their front door in what Northern California authorities are calling a "freak accident." The Alpine County Sheriff's Department said that Olga Perkovic, 50, of San Francisco and her son Aaron Goodstein had been skiing in Kirkwood, which is in the Sierra Nevada near the state line. They were returning home from the slopes Sunday when a chunk of snow about the size of a trailer fell from the roof of their vacation condo, burying them under about 3 feet (0.91 meters) of snow. "It was a freak accident," said Undersheriff Spencer Pace. He said warming temperatures often cause large chunks of snow to slide off roofs, occasionally injuring people. But he said neither he nor the sheriff can recall of sliding snow killing in the three decades they've been there. Pace said Perkovic's mother, who was staying in the condo with the family of five, reported the pair missing at about 6:40 p.m. Sunday.

5 types of apples, once thought extinct, are rediscovered

LEWISTON, Idaho (AP)—Five types of apples, once thought to be extinct, have been rediscovered in northern Idaho and eastern Washington. The Lewiston Tribune newspaper reported Monday that "apple detective" David Benscoter located the trees growing near a butte in the rolling hills of the vast Palouse agricultural area. Benscoter worked with apple experts at the Temperate Orchard Conservancy in Oregon and Fedco Seeds in Maine to positively identify the apple types. They were compared to written descriptions from old books and antique watercolor paintings. The newly rediscovered apples include the Shackleford, Saxon Priest, Kittageskee, Ewalt and McAffee varietals. An estimated 17,000 named apple varieties are thought to have originated in North America, but Benscoter says only about 4,000 still exist today. "I just love the history of these old apples and what they meant to the first homesteaders that arrived here in eastern Washington and northern Idaho," Benscoter said. "The apple was the most important fruit you could have, and it could be used in so many ways." He first became interested in hunting down the almost-gone and nearly forgotten fruit when he helped a neighbor with chores on her property. He found an old apple tree and began to search the internet to try to figure out what variety it bore.

Asia

US Navy carrier's visit to Vietnam puts China on notice



AP
USS Carl Vinson is anchored at Tien Sa Port in Danang, Vietnam, Monday, March 5, 2018. For the first time since the Vietnam War, the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier is paying a visit to a Vietnamese port, seeking to bolster both countries' efforts to stem expansionism by China in the South China Sea.

DANANG, Vietnam (AP)—For the first time since the Vietnam War, a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier is paying a visit to a Vietnamese port, seeking to bolster both countries' efforts to stem expansionism by China in the South China Sea.

Monday's visit by the USS Carl Vinson brings more than 5,000 crewmembers to the central coastal city of Danang, the largest such U.S. military presence in Vietnam since the Southeast Asian nation was unified under Communist leadership after the war ended in 1975.

The Carl Vinson, accompanied by a cruiser and a destroyer, is visiting as China increases its military buildup in the Paracel islands and seven artificial islands in the Spratlys in maritime territory also claimed by Vietnam. China claims most of the South China Sea and has challenged traditional U.S. naval supremacy in the western Pacific.

"The visit of aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson to Vietnam signifies an increased level of trust between the two former enemies, a strengthened defense relationship between them, and reflects America's continued naval engagement with the region," said Le Hong Hiep, a research fellow at the Singapore-based ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

The ship's mission includes technical exchanges, sports matches and visits to an orphanage and a center for victims of Agent Orange, a toxic defoliant sprayed by U.S. forces to deny cover for Communist fighters during the war. It marks a fine-tuning, rather than a turning point, in relations. The U.S. Navy has staged activities in Vietnam for its Pacific Partnership humanitarian and civic missions in nine of the past 12 years.

U.S. Ambassador Daniel Kritenbrink praised the carrier's visit.

"I think the visit by USS Carl Vinson demonstrates our commitment to the U.S- Vietnam partnership. It also demonstrates the dramatic progress we made in our bilateral relationship in recent years," he said.

The ambassador said the two countries share a range of interests that include "a desire to maintain peace, prosperity, unimpeded commerce, freedom of navigation upon which the region and its economies depend."

The United States normalized relations with Vietnam in 1995 and lifted an arms embargo in 2016, and the two former adversaries have steadily improved relations in all areas, including trade, investment and security.

The visit of an aircraft carrier—a more than 100,000-ton manifestation of U.S. global military projection—reaffirms closer relations as Beijing flexes it political, economic and military muscle in Southeast Asia, and Washington seeks to re-establish its influence.

"Although the visit is mainly symbolic and would not be able to change China's behavior, especially in the South China Sea, it is still necessary in conveying the message that the U.S. will be there to stay," Hiep said.

Separately from this week's mission, U.S. officials say American warships continue sailing without prior notice close to China-occupied islands and atolls, an aggressive way of signaling to Beijing that the U.S. does not recognize its sovereignty over those areas.

Hiep said the Carl Vinson's visit is likely to irritate China, but that Beijing will not take it too seriously.

"They understand well the strategic rationale behind the rapprochement between Vietnam and the U.S., which was largely driven by China's growing assertiveness in the South China Sea," he said. "However, China also knows that Vietnam is unlikely to side with the U.S. militarily to challenge China."

PH govt asks Supreme Court to expel chief justice

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine government's legal counsel asked the Supreme Court on Monday to expel the chief justice for allegedly not declaring her assets, in a new attempt to remove the nation's judicial leader.

Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno, whom President Rodrigo Duterte has long wanted to remove, went on leave from the 15-member court last week. That came after 13 of her colleagues, including some who have publicly criticized her, agreed that she should take an indefinite leave amid an impeachment attempt against her in the House of Representatives.

The House, which is dominated by Duterte's allies, is expected to impeach her this month based on 27 allegations filed by a lawyer, including her alleged failure to file her annual statements of assets and liabilities as required by law. If she's impeached, the Senate will form itself into an impeachment court.

Last year, Duterte said he wanted Sereno and a top anti-graft prosecutor impeached and accused them of allowing themselves to be used to discredit his administration.

Solicitor General Jose Calida filed a petition before the Supreme Court justices questioning Sereno's eligibility for her job after she allegedly failed to file a required annual statement of assets and liabilities 10 times.

"The constitution insists that a member of the judiciary must be a person of proven competence, integrity, probity and independence," Calida told reporters. "Unfortunately, for respondent Sereno, she flunked the test of integrity when she failed to file."

In the petition, Calida said the Judicial Bar Council, which recommends candidates for chief justice to the president, recommended Sereno for the office despite her failure to submit her asset declarations between 1986 and 2006, when she served as a professor in the College of Law at the state-run University of the Philippines.

A report to the Judicial Bar Council mistakenly reported that Sereno had completed the requirements, and that misled the council into including her in the final list of candidates for chief justice, the petition said.

Her spokesman, however, said Sereno has declared all her income and paid the corresponding taxes and can prove that in an impeachment trial.

The spokesman, Jojo Lacanilao, said she has not committed any wrongdoing and "did not do anything that can amount to an impeachable offense" and looks forward to the trial, where her defense attorneys can confront her accusers.

An opposition congressman, Edcel Lagman, said Calida deliberately filed the government petition against Sereno before the Supreme Court, where several of her colleagues have shown hostility against her, when he could also go to lower courts. He added that the time required to file such a petition against Sereno may have lapsed.

Lagman said at least seven justices who have been trying to have Sereno removed should inhibit themselves from voting on the new government petition against her.

A left-wing women's party, Gabriela, urged the public to join an International Women's Day march to the presidential palace on Thursday to help fight the moves to unseat Sereno. "This latest move is meant to exert increased pressure on the judiciary to make it pliant to Duterte's dictatorial dream and to fan the conflict within the high court," the group said.

International rights groups and local critics have accused Duterte of drifting toward authoritarianism after declaring martial law in the south. He has overseen a drug war marked by thousands of killings of mostly poor suspects and has publicly threatened his opponents.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Taiwan looks to domestic arms industry to respond to China

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan's defense ministry says it will look to its domestic arms industry as well as foreign suppliers to respond to China's continuing military buildup. Spokesman Chen Chung-ji said Tuesday the self-governing island had no interest in getting involved in an arms race with China, which the day before announced an 8.1 percent rise in its military budget for this year. China regards Taiwan as Chinese territory to be eventually brought under its control, by force if necessary. Years of double-digit percentage growth have given China the world's second-largest defense budget after the United States. The country is preparing to launch its second aircraft carrier, integrating stealth fighters into its air force and fielding an array of advanced missiles able to attack air and sea targets at vast distances.

Protests rock Kashmir after deadly shooting by Indian troops

SRINAGAR, India (AP)—Tens of thousands of angry protesters poured into the streets more than a dozen times in Indian-controlled Kashmir on Monday, hurling rocks and shouting anti-India slogans after soldiers killed four civilians and two suspected militants. Government forces responded with tear gas. The overnight shooting at a military checkpoint threatened to spark even more unrest in a region that in recent years has seen renewed rebel attacks and repeated public protests against Indian rule. The authorities had put parts of the highly militarized region under lockdown after the late Sunday night shooting, deploying soldiers and riot police, shutting schools and internet service and ordering people off the streets in some places in an attempt to derail protests. But widespread anger, along with funerals for the six victims and separatist calls for a business shutdown, helped ignite angry demonstrations.

Cambodian leader rejects call for talks from opposition

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen on Monday rejected a request from opposition leader Sam Rainsy for talks about the country's political problems, denigrating his archrival as a traitor and a convict. Hun Sen was responding to a message posted Sunday on Twitter by Sam Rainsy, a founder of the Cambodia National Rescue Party, which called for negotiations to end a political crisis that has quashed many aspects of democracy, with the opposition party dissolved and its members thrown out of parliament. Cambodian courts, generally considered to be under ruling party influence, last November sustained a government claim that the opposition party had conspired with foreigners to overthrow the ruling party. A general election is scheduled for July, but with the absence of the Cambodia National Rescue Party, Hun Sen's Cambodia People's Party faces no credible challengers.

World

UN begins aid delivery to rebel-held suburbs of Damascus

BEIRUT (AP)—A U.N. convoy carrying desperately needed food and medicine to besieged civilians entered the war-ravaged eastern suburbs of Damascus on Monday, but aid agencies said Syrian authorities blocked the delivery of some of the health supplies, including trauma and surgical kits and insulin.

The shipment was the first to enter eastern Ghouta since Russia instituted what it called daily "humanitarian pauses" in the fighting a week ago. It also was the first time in weeks that any aid has been allowed in amid a crippling siege and a government assault that has killed hundreds of people in the past month.

Despite the truce, at least 50 civilians were killed Monday in airstrikes and shelling, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group. The activist-run Ghouta Media Center said 24 people were killed in Hammouriyeh and another 10 in Harasta, both towns in eastern Ghouta.

The U.N.'s humanitarian office said the 46-truck convoy of health and nutrition supplies, along with food for 27,500 people, entered Douma—the largest town in eastern Ghouta—around midday.

But it said the Syrian government did not allow 70 percent of the health supplies to be loaded and would not allow them to be replaced by other items.

AP
This photo released by the Syrian Red Crescent shows a convoy of vehicles of the Syrian Red Crescent arriving to Douma, eastern Ghouta, a suburb of Damascus, Syria, Monday, March. 5, 2018.

The World Health Organization said that during an obligatory routine inspection by Syrian national authorities, many of the supplies in the WHO shipment were rejected, including all trauma, surgical, dialysis and insulin supplies.

Marwa Awad, a spokeswoman for the World Food Program in Damascus who accompanied the convoy, also said many of the life-saving health supplies were not allowed to be loaded.

"Consequently, three of the 46 trucks being sent to Duma today are close to empty," she told The Associated Press. "We hope to be able to take them inside on the next convoy Thursday."

The government routinely removes lifesaving medical supplies from aid convoys, in a pattern of denying such aid to civilians living in opposition areas. U.N. officials have complained for years about such actions by the Syrian government.

Many civilians in Douma are desperate for food and medicine, and had hoped for relief as the convoy began entering the area, one of the last rebel strongholds near the capital.

Eastern Ghouta, home to about 400,000 people, has been under a crippling siege and daily bombardment for months. More than 700 civilians have been killed in the last two weeks alone.

Douma-based media activist Ahmad Khansour said there is "tremendous reproach" against the U.N. and the international community in eastern Ghouta.

"It's not possible that the (Syrian) regime is allowed to besiege a city for six years, and then we wait for them to approve an aid delivery," he said.

Khansour said the aid covers 7 percent of the people in need.

"Can you imagine such a number? It means if we divide it evenly, each family gets 2 kilograms (about 4.5 pounds). It's enough for one day. It's unbelievable how shameful this is of the U.N.," he added.

The U.N.'s Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria, Ali al-Za'tari, said the aid was delivered to civilian groups and local councils, in coordination with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Military groups did not receive any supplies, he said.

"We hope that civilians will get a fair share, their share, their ultimate share of the humanitarian supplies," al-Za'tari said.

Ingy Sedky, a spokeswoman for the International Committee of the Red Cross in Damascus, said the aid delivery was a "first positive step" that would lessen the suffering of the civilians.

"However, more needs to be done in the coming period," she added. "A one-time aid delivery will never be enough to fulfill the needs. Repeated and continuous access to eastern Ghouta by humanitarian organizations is a must."

Sedky said the delivery included 5,500 bags of food and flour, enough for 27,500 people, in addition to medical items. One food parcel should last a month for family of five, the ICRC said.

"Feels like racing with time," said her colleague, Pawel Krzysiek, in a tweet after the trucks arrived in Wafideen, a key crossing point set up by the Syrian government for civilians leaving eastern Ghouta and for aid to enter.

Pragmatic candidate livens up Venezuela's presidential race

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—In another year, Henri Falcon might be just another middle-of-the-pack presidential candidate in Venezuela. He's not the most popular opposition leader. He's a dull speechmaker. The parties that back him are small. He's managed to irritate both the left and the right.

But a boycott of the race by Venezuela's biggest parties means Falcon is by far the most prominent option on the May 20 ballot for those who want to unseat socialist President Nicolas Maduro—and polls indicate that is the majority in a country with spreading hunger and an almost worthless currency.

Some of the same polls even have the former governor as the front-runner, with a double-digit lead over Maduro. The big question is whether that will matter. Most of Venezuela's opposition, joined by the U.S. and much of the international community, is convinced it won't—that the fix is in.

The government long ago stacked the electoral council and judiciary with its supporters and has ignored the opposition-dominated congress that was chosen in 2015 in the country's last relatively contested vote. The opposition's most combative leaders are banned from participating, imprisoned or in exile. The presidential election, normally held late in the year, has been moved forward to the spring, leaving Maduro's squabbling opponents little time to prepare.

In response, the main opposition coalition has refused to field a candidate. Last week's registration deadline passed with just Falcon and four relatively obscure figures signing up to challenge Maduro.

Falcon, 56, lacks the flair of many Venezuelan political figures. Maduro, a former bus driver and frustrated rock 'n' roller, mimics the impassioned, flamboyant speaking style of his mentor, the late President Hugo Chavez, who enthralled Venezuelans as he led the country on an oil boom-fueled march toward his version of socialism. Other more fiery opposition figures like Henrique Capriles and Leopoldo Lopez have galvanized huge anti-government street demonstrations.

By contrast, Falcon comes across as a cerebral, competent manager driven more by pragmatism than ideology.

Even while in the ruling socialist movement, he kept lines open to the business community that was being pummeled by much of the government. Now as an opponent, he calls for preserving generous social programs and subsidies started under Chavez.

He has urged seeking help from the International Monetary Fund, a boogeyman to most of Latin America's left, and his most noted economic adviser, Wall Street analyst Francisco Rodriguez, has called for adopting the dollar as the national currency as a way to halt the hyperinflation that has devastated the economy.

Toronto police find 7th victim in serial killer case

TORONTO (AP)—Toronto police have found a seventh set of remains related to the investigation into alleged serial killer Bruce McArthur and have released a picture of a bearded, darker skinned dead man.

Detective Sgt. Hank Idsinga said Monday they could not identify the man in the picture and are now seeking the public's help.

"I do not want to release this picture and I'm doing so as a last resort," he said.

Idsinga declined to say how police obtained the picture of the dead man.

He said they showed the picture to members of the gay community but could not identify him. Many of the other alleged victims have been darker skinned and of South Asian or Middle Eastern descent who frequented the "Gay Village" area of Toronto.

Idsinga said they've now found the dismembered remains of at least seven individuals this year in large planters at a home where McArthur did landscaping work and stored objects. It's not clear if the remains of the seventh man are of the same man seen in the picture released by police.

He said they realize how difficult it might be for a relative or friend to see the picture and realize the man is deceased.

"I've never done this before," he said about releasing the photo. "I do it with great hesitation. It is obviously a key piece of evidence that we have that we are releasing, but we feel by releasing it, hopefully we can identify him and close off that area of the investigation."

Investigators have identified three sets of remains so far—49-year-old Andrew Kinsman, 50-year-old Soroush Mahmudi and 40-year-old Skandaraj Navaratnam.

McArthur, 66, is charged with first-degree murder in their deaths, as well as the presumed deaths of 44-year-old Selim Esen; Majeed Kayhan, 58; and Dean Lisowick, either 43 or 44. Police have said they believe there are more victims.

Dr. Michael Pollanen, Chief Forensic Pathologist for the Province of Ontario, said the causes of death are pending further studies.

Investigators have not yet released complete details, but McArthur is believed to have met his alleged victims in the Gay Village and on gay dating apps for older and large men with names such as "SilverDaddies" and "Bear411."

Police are looking at unsolved missing person cases to determine if there are connections to McArthur and are running down tips that have come in from around the world.

McArthur, a grandfather and former mall Santa Claus, has not entered a plea. His case is due back in court March 14. Edward Royle, a lawyer for McArthur, has previously declined to comment on the case and didn't respond to a message seeking comment on Monday.

Focus

Italy's populist parties rule the day, but will they rule?

ROME (AP)—Italy's voters have spoken, and the populists ruled the day. But whether these euroskeptics can put aside their distrust and rivalries to rule together was the big question Monday as the nation embarked on a new era following a quarter-century of largely predictable coalition-formula politics.

More than half the ballots cast Sunday went to two populist forces that knew how to read the angry mood in a country where the brightest youths must go abroad to find decent careers and where hundreds of thousands of migrants were essentially marooned when many European Union partners slammed the door on these asylum-seekers rescued at sea.

The math added up to big dilemma, though. Because no party or coalition captured enough seats to rule alone, and because the populists went into the election as sharp rivals despite their similar "Italy, first," stances, it was unclear if a government with the potential to last could be forged to tackle Italy's pressing economic and social problems.

No one seemed to have the answer Monday.

"The (next) government is an enigma," read the front-page headline of the daily Corriere della Sera.

Emerging on top—and the pick of nearly a third of those who cast ballots—was the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement, founded in 2009 by comic Beppe Grillo and the largest opposition force in the just-ended legislature.

The other main player in maneuvers to try to form a government is the anti-immigrant League, led by Matteo Salvini, which expanded beyond its northern base to outpoll the conservative Forza Italia, the party created in the mid-1990s by Silvio Berlusconi.

"March 4's vote represents a watershed, with the maximum affirmation of anti-establishment parties in the Western Europe panorama, from the post war to today," said Rome's LUISS university's center for Italian electoral studies.

For roughly a quarter-century following the political upheaval in Europe set in motion by the demise of Eastern bloc communism, Italy's elections had largely alternated power between a center-right coalition headed by Berlusconi, who served three terms as premier, and a center-left bloc built around the Democratic Party, many of them former communists.

AP

Democratic Party leader Matteo Renzi leaves at the end of a press conference on the election results, in Rome, Monday, March 5, 2018.

That system had been dubbed the "second republic." It followed the so-called "first republic" of the post-war generation, in which Christian Democrats anchored government after short-lived coalitions, cobbled together with the aim of keeping what was then Western Europe's largest communist party out of power. That system crumbled in the early 1990s amid corruption scandals that swept away virtually an entire political class.

"Today for us is the start of the third republic. And the third will finally be the republic of the citizens," exulted Luigi Di Maio, the 5-Star Movement's 31-year-old candidate for premier.

But how that new era will take shape is very unclear.

Berlusconi, sidelined from holding office due to a tax fraud conviction and relishing the prospect of playing kingmaker after Sunday's vote, suffered what could be a definitive blow for the 81-year-old media mogul. Berlusconi's Forza Italia captured only 14 percent of the vote, compared to 18 percent for coalition partner Salvini's League, which achieved virtual dominance in Italy's prosperous northern regions, where Berlusconi made much of his immense wealth.

The League's votes, along with Forza Italia and those of a smaller partner, the far-right Brothers of Italy, totaled 37 percent of ballots cast—nowhere near the absolute majority needed to win the confidence votes in each chamber of Parliament required under Italy's system for governing.

The 5-Stars Movement's better-than-expected 32 percent showing was boosted by its dominance of the south, where Forza Italia had long held sway.

This north-south divide is a new element that could complicate any power-sharing, political analyst Angelo Panebianco said.

"Government formation will take longer because of this division" as leaders adjust to new territorial equilibriums, he said on Sky TG24.

Further complicating the path toward a new government are campaign vows by the 5-Stars Movement never to govern in a coalition.

Savoring the center-right's performance, Salvini vowed that the bloc had won "the right and the duty to govern." Berlusconi and Salvini huddled on Monday at the mogul's estate on Milan's outskirts, but there were no indications what strategy the two leaders might chart.

"I am and I will remain a populist," Salvini told reporters. He sought to assure financial markets that his leadership wouldn't be anything to fear, even as he reaffirmed his belief that Italy's membership in the euro common currency was a mistake.

Asked about the possibility of joining forces with the 5-Stars Movement to govern, Salvini replied: "No, no, no."

For its part, the 5-Stars Movement has insisted it would never dirty itself by joining a government alliance. But as the first results were trickling in early Monday, 5-Stars leaders started sending another message, saying they expected Italy's parties will have to come to them to work out a deal for government.

Shaping up to be the largest opposition party in Parliament was the Democrats of former Premier Matteo Renzi, which had been the main coalition partner in government since 2013. Splintered and squabbling under what was seen by critics as a heavy-handed leadership, the Democratic Party plunged to 23 percent.

Renzi vowed to stay on as party leader until a new government is formed to ensure the Democrats don't lend support to any "extremist" force. He described both the League and the 5-Stars as embodying an anti-Europe spirit he couldn't embrace. He also noted that during the campaign both Salvini and Di Maio had branded Democratic lawmakers as Mafiosi and corrupt.

"If that's who we are, govern without us," Renzi said, declaring that his party's place in the new legislature was in the opposition.

The virulently anti-immigrant League's big jump in popularity came through a remarkable transformation. For this election, Salvini shed the name "Northern" from the party's label, seeking to expand influence beyond its geographic stronghold. In the south, where it made virtually no impact at all in the 2013 election, it polled 6.7 percent, a respectable showing he can use to strengthen his hand in maneuvering to create a government.

Salvini also cozied up with like-minded Europeans. He met privately with Russian leader Vladimir Putin in 2014 in Milan, has aligned himself with France's populist leader Marine Le Pen and praised Hungary's leader Viktor Orban, who similarly took a hard stand on migrants.

AP Explains: Populist surge leaves hung Parliament in Italy

ROME (AP)—Italian voters delivered a stinging blow to their country's pro-European political powers, with more than half of the electorate backing populist, euroskeptic parties in Sunday's election, according to near-final results.

The result could leave Italy with a hung Parliament and difficult coalition talks lie ahead for parties vying to form the next government.

Here are some of the main takeaways from the election and what to expect in coming weeks as Italy tries to avoid a political stalemate.

A 5-STAR MOMENT

The 5-Star Movement, founded by an Italian comedian just nine years ago as an online-driven grassroots revolt against Italy's political establishment, was the biggest winner in Sunday's election, capturing about one-third of the vote.

Appealing to disillusioned voters, particularly in Italy's poorer south, the group combines a wide range of views that make it hard to place on a left-right spectrum: It is pro-environment, anti-banks and skeptical of the European Union.

The big question for the 5-Star Movement after its strong results is whether to stick to its policy of not forming alliances with other parties. Being an outsider is a core part of the movement's identity, but if 31-year-old leader Luigi Di Maio wants to become Italy's next premier he's going to have to seek support from others.

NO MAJORITY

Who ends up governing Italy will depend on the success of coalition talks that could drag on for weeks or even months, since none of the parties or alliances heading into the election will end up with a majority in Parliament.

A center-right alliance including former Premier Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia party will have the most seats after winning 37 percent of the vote, compared to 23 percent for the governing center-left bloc.

Before the vote, analysts predicted a grand coalition built around the center-left Democrats and Forza Italia. However, that seems unlikely given the Democrats' poor result and the fact that Berlusconi's party was overtaken by its nationalist and anti-migrant ally, the League, which jumped to 18 percent from just 4 percent in the last election in 2013.

A nightmare scenario for the EU would be a combination of the 5-Star Movement and the League, which together would command a majority of seats in Parliament. Both parties have previously called for Italy to abandon the euro currency zone, though the 5-Star Movement dropped that demand in the run-up to the election and the League has predicted that the single European currency will fail on its own.

The League's candidate for premier, Matteo Salvini, said clearly on Monday that he would not form "a strange alliance," a clear reference to the 5-Stars, but with tough talks ahead positions could shift as options narrow.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The newly elected Parliament will convene on March 23. After that, Italian President Sergio Mattarella will consult with party leaders to figure out which coalition alternative has the highest chances of surviving a confidence vote.

If no successful constellation of political groups emerges from those talks, the silver-haired president could end up appointing a government with the primary task of changing the complex election law that created this scenario, which would resign once that job is finished. But that's also a recipe for stalling reforms and would raise the prospect of another election soon.

European investors seemed to have factored in some uncertainty following the Italian election and the outcome didn't have a big impact on markets Monday. But a prolonged political stalemate would be bad news for Italy's economy, which lags the rest of the eurozone and has a debt of over 130 percent of GDP.

BIG LOSERS

Despite all the unknowns, two certainties emerged: Berlusconi no longer commands the center-right, and the center-left has collapsed.

Berlusconi's Forza Italia, launched in 1994 when the billionaire media mogul first entered politics, was upstaged by its longtime junior coalition partner, the League.

The takeaway? "Berlusconi is no longer indispensable," said Roberto D'Alimonte of Rome's LUISS University.

In essence, what two decades of legal woes and Bunga Bunga parties couldn't achieve, Italy's voters have.

The other big looser was the Democratic Party and in particular its secretary, Matteo Renzi.

The Democrats didn't even win in Emilio-Romania, a historic stronghold.

Good Housekeeping

Abelias have moved to the must have plant category

By NORMAN WINTER
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Never did I think I would see the day that abelias were making my list of must-have plants. I wrote about some of the new abelias in the spring of 2014, and now four years later, they are real performers. At the Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens we got Kaleidoscope, and Miss Lemon for evaluating and trial purposes from the Southern Living Plant Collection.

These two abelias have been nothing but stunning, and now, I am plant lusting, if you will, over Confetti. This abelia also part of the collection is compact yet vigorous with shades of hot pink, creamy white, and green. It is unbelievably cold hardy to minus 20 and is recommended from zones 5-9.

Sadly, many people have never heard of an abelia and others, perhaps Edward Goucher that was pretty doggone good. But these new varieties with glossy variegated foliage would thrill even if they never bloom.

Kaleidoscope for instance which is cold hardy to zone 6 produce foliage that is glossy and variegated seemingly to be ever changing in shades of green golden-yellow, red and orange giving it year-round interest. It reaches 36-inches tall with a 4-foot spread and is environmentally friendly due to its pest-free nature.

They do bloom however almost non-stop. Most of you who read my columns know I place great importance on whether blooms bring in the pollinators. I am happy to say that these abelias which may be the longest bloomers in the market produce lightly fragrant, funnel-shaped flowers that have proven to bring in swallowtail butterfly species, honeybees, and hummingbirds.

TNS

Swallowtail butterflies, hummingbirds and bees will frequent the blooms of Kaleidoscope, Confetti, and Miss Lemon abelias.

The colorful foliage and arching habit makes the abelia a nice contrasting combination plant among evergreens. At the Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens, ours were near Soft Caress mahonia and spreading yew, while others are planted ever so picturesque in front of Canary Island date palms and Chinese snowball viburnums.

Whichever abelias you choose, consider planting in odd-numbered clusters in full to part sun. Prepare the bed by incorporating 3- to-4 inches of organic matter and 2 pounds of a 12-6-6 fertilizer per 100 square feet of planting area, tilling deeply.

Dig the planting hole two to three times as wide as the rootball but no deeper. Place the abelia in the hole and backfill with soil to two-thirds the depth. Tamp the soil and water to settle, add the remaining backfill, repeat the process and apply mulch. The wide holes allow for the quickest acclimation to your bed.

After your plants are established, there is not much required. Feed in late winter with a light application of a slow released 12-6-6 fertilizer equaling about 1 pound per 100 square feet of planted area. Even though it is considered to have a dry to average moisture requirement, maintaining an even supply of water during prolonged dry spells pays dividends as it makes for an incredible showy plant.

Kaleidoscope, Confetti, and Miss Lemon are among the showiest selections you will find at the garden center. Keep your eyes open however for Radiance which is brand new to the Southern Living Plant Collection group. It too is compact and vigorous and produces variegated foliage with crimson stems. You'll find the leaves beginning green with creamy margins aging to silver green and cream for a dramatic contrast. Believe me when I say you need abelias.

TNS

Kaleidoscope abelia has formed a colorful hedge in front of this Chinese snowball viburnum.

TNS

Kaleidoscope abelia echoes the colors of the blooms in the Canary Island date palm.

TNS

Confetti abelia is compact, colorful and extremely cold hardy to minus twenty.

TNS

Kaleidoscope abelia creates a stunning contrast with this Japanese beautyberry.

The Garden Bug
Spring garden prep
As day lengths increase, plants begin new growth. Repot rootbound plants, moving them to containers 2 inches larger in diameter than their current pot. Check for insect activity and apply controls as needed. Leggy plants may be pruned now. Summer and fall blooming perennials should be divided in spring.
– Brenda Weaver
Source: www.missouribotanicalgarden.org

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Life & Style

#MeToo's global impact: Big in some places, scanty in others

By DAVID CRARY
AP NATIONAL WRITER

In this Feb. 3, 2018 file photo, women in animal costumes take part in the block party "Maria vem com as outras," or "Maria, join the other women," in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In Brazil, many woman chose to push back against sexual harassment during this year's Carnival celebrations, with block parties of all-female musicians, shirts, necklaces and crowns with messages like "my breasts, my rules" and several campaigns to report and crackdown on harassment. But overall, the movement has not caught on in Brazil, which has one of the world's highest homicide rates for women. AP

Thanks to the vast reach of social media and the prevalence of sexual misconduct in virtually every society, the #MeToo movement has proven itself a genuinely global phenomenon. Yet its impact varies widely from country to country, from potentially momentous to inconsequential.

No other nation has experienced anything close to the developments in the United States, the movement's birthplace, where scores of prominent men—among them politicians, media stars and movie moguls—have lost jobs and reputations after facing sexual misconduct allegations.

As the global women's movement prepares for International Women's Day on Thursday, it's clear the record elsewhere is mixed.

In Western Europe, some VIPs have been discredited and some new anti-harassment laws are in the works. Worldwide, the fallout includes backlashes against women who speak out, divisions within feminist ranks and minimal repercussions for accused harassers. And in many countries, the U.S. included, the movement has consisted primarily of well-educated professionals, largely leaving out working-class and poor women. Some skeptics have coined the hashtag #WeFew.

In some countries where the movement hasn't caught fire, analysts have suggested that resistance to American cultural trends is among the factors.

"I wish it hadn't started in the U.S.," said Anne Marie Goetz, a professor of global affairs at New York University and a former United Nations adviser on women's issues.

"The fastest way to discredit any women's rights struggle is to say it comes from somewhere else," Goetz said. "That's been a longstanding putdown of feminist movements all around the world."

In China, discussion of #MeToo has sometimes been censored on social media and branded as a destabilizing foreign movement. To thwart the censors, social media users have made creative use of hashtags such as #RiceBunny—a phrase which in China is pronounced "me too."

The hashtags—and women's accounts of harassment—proliferated in January after Luo Xixi, an academic now based in the U.S., accused a renowned Beijing-based professor of sexual misconduct when she was a graduate student. Other women lodged similar allegations, and the professor was fired. But questions linger as to whether a feminist movement can gain greater clout in the face of government resistance.

In India, sexual misconduct allegations against more than 60 academics sparked divisions among feminists. A crowd-sourced list of alleged harassers was posted on Facebook by a U.S.-based law student, with contributions from students in India. But the list contained few details about the allegations or accusers, and was criticized by some women as unfair.

India passed a law in 2013 to combat workplace sexual harassment, but gender-equality activist Sudarshana Kundu said many women remain hesitant to speak up.

"There is culture of silencing that is prevalent," she said by email. "Organizations are worried about their credibility and counsel their women employees to not report instances and instead seek conciliation."

Perhaps no country has had a more complex reaction to #MeToo than France—long identified as a haven for romance. The government is preparing new legislation on sexual violence and harassment, and some lawmakers want to impose fines for sexist catcalls. Yet despite sexual misconduct allegations against several prominent men, they have maintained their jobs and status. French feminist ranks, meanwhile, have experienced divisions—notably when actress Catherine Deneuve co-signed a letter depicting #MeToo accusers as puritanical, only to apologize after facing a backlash of criticism.

In Britain, organizers decided to discontinue an annual men-only charity gala after a Financial Times investigation found that female hostesses—required to wear short skirts and high heels—were groped by some of the hundreds of senior executives who attended the event in January. "It is quite extraordinary to me that in the 21st century allegations of this kind are emerging," Education Minister Anne Milton told the House of Commons. "Women have the right to feel safe wherever they work."

Harassment allegations last year led to one high-level resignation—that of Defense Secretary Michael Fallon—and prompted political leaders to propose a new grievance procedure for people working in Parliament.

Even in Nordic countries ranked high for gender equality, there has been #MeToo turmoil. In Iceland and Sweden, women in numerous professional sectors mounted social media campaigns to raise awareness about widespread sexual misconduct; the Swedish government has proposed tightening its rape law to stipulate that explicit consent is required before sexual contact.

In many parts of the world—including Africa and much of Latin America—the #MeToo movement has had only modest impact. Many countries in these regions have weak support systems for women who do report sexual assault.

Many Brazilian women chose to push back against sexual harassment during this year's Carnival celebrations, with block parties of all-female musicians, plus shirts, necklaces and crowns with messages like "my breasts, my rules" and several anti-harassment campaigns. But overall, the movement has not caught on in Brazil, which has one of the world's highest homicide rates for women.

In South Africa, also plagued by a high rate of violence against women, feminists are frustrated by the almost total lack of repercussions for prominent men linked to sexual misconduct.

"We need more hashtags and awareness, but more importantly we need action and accountability," wrote Shaazia Ebrahim in an online opinion piece. "If we continue to allow sexism on the highest platforms in South Africa, we shouldn't be shocked about our gender-based violence statistics."

The fatalism of some South African women was reflected in recent interviews conducted by Norwegian student activists working in Johannesburg.

The Oscars' most intimate celebrity moments occur off-camera

LOS ANGELES (AP) — There are cameras everywhere at the Academy Awards, but some of the most intimate celebrity moments at the show still manage to escape the lens.

Here's a look at some of the backstage interactions that never made it to TV screens:

LADY-BIRD BONDING: Greta Gerwig and Laura Dern shared some poignant moments backstage before presenting the documentary award.

The two women spent at least 10 minutes backstage together chatting and preparing for their moment onstage, during which Dern gave Gerwig a bit of a pep-talk.

"It's amazing. And it's historic," Dern told Gerwig of her best director nomination — the fifth woman in academy history to be so recognized. "Are you breathing?" the elder actress asked.

"Your dress is perfect. Your makeup is perfect," Dern said. "Let's check the booty."

With that, Dern and Gerwig turned around to reveal the back of their dresses to each other, which they deemed camera-ready.

Dern also advised her co-presenter not to slouch or lean into the microphone.

"Shoulders back," Gerwig said, convincing herself.

Still, Dern worried about having worn her eyeglasses.

"No, they look so cute!" Gerwig said. "There's nothing hotter than a hot lady with glasses."

They discussed whether they should walk out arm in arm or holding hands. Gerwig took an impromptu vote with backstage workers, who said holding hands would be their best bet.

"Good," Gerwig said. "We crowd-sourced it."

The two women emerged onstage holding hands.

FOOT FETISH: Comedic actresses Maya Rudolph and Tiffany Haddish had planned to wear comfortable footwear onto the Oscar stage even before it became part of their lines Sunday night.

Haddish insisted on wearing her slippers onstage.

"Girl, I got bunions and corns," Haddish told Rudolph. "The foot-fetish people will be all about it. Did you see that bunion? Did you see them corns?"

The comedienne joked to Rudolph that she's been using "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter" spray on her feet.

DIVA IN THE HOUSE: Oscar-winner Faye Dunaway likes to make her own rules. She refused to stay in her position backstage before announcing the best picture winner.

The 77-year-old Dunaway repeatedly walked away from her prescribed spot backstage before she and Warren Beatty were to announce the final award of the night.

She demanded to know where her lines were and whether Allison Janney won for supporting actress (she did).

When a backstage photographer snapped a candid photo of Dunaway, she was livid. She told the man to "go away" and made the kind of shooing motion one might use for a pet dog.

She and Warren Beatty successfully announced the best picture winner this year: "The Shape of Water."

Later, while posing for photos with the night's winners, Dunaway continued directing the photographers who captured her image.

Man arrested, accused of stealing McDormand's Oscar trophy

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A man was arrested and is accused of stealing Frances McDormand's Oscars trophy after the Academy Awards on Sunday night, Los Angeles police said.

Terry Bryant, 47, was arrested on suspicion of felony grand theft, said Officer Rosario Herrera, a police spokeswoman.

Video captured by The Associated Press appears to show Bryant walking with the statuette out of the Governors Ball, the Oscars after-party where police say he took it.

The video shows a man in a tuxedo who appears to be Bryant holding an Oscar statuette highly and proudly as an onlooker cheers.

"All right baby boys, and baby girls," he says, walking quickly and nearly bumping into a woman.

He then quickly glances around him before walking out of frame, prominently holding the Oscar the entire time.

Another photographer who took Bryant's picture at about the same time did not recognize him as a winner at the ceremony, and began following him, police said.

When he was confronted, Bryant handed back the statuette without a fight, police said.

He was detained by security guards at the event and arrested by Los Angeles police officers. The award was later returned to McDormand.

"After some brief time apart, Frances and her Oscar were happily reunited. They celebrated the reunion with a double cheeseburger from In-N-Out Burger," McDormand's publicist, Simon Halls, told the AP.

McDormand received the Academy Award for Best Actress for her performance in "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri."

The two-time Oscar winner, who swept trophies at the Golden Globes, Screen Actors Guild, Independent Spirit and BAFTA ceremonies, beat out Sally Hawkins of "The Shape of Water," Margot Robbie of "I, Tonya," Saoirse Ronan of "Lady Bird," and 21-time nominee Meryl Streep of "The Post" at Sunday's Oscars.

In "Three Billboards," McDormand played Mildred Hayes, a hardened woman seeking justice for her daughter's murder in the crime drama.

Her first Oscar came for the 1996 film "Fargo," directed by her husband Joel Coen.

Bryant was being held on $20,000 bail Monday, police said.

There was no immediate reply to a message sent to one of Bryant's social media profiles and it wasn't clear if had an attorney who could comment on his behalf.

A video that posted live on a Facebook page that appeared to belong to Bryant showed him kissing and flaunting a statuette during the Governor's Ball.

"Look it, baby. My team got this tonight. This is mine," he said, turning the trophy toward the camera, before kissing it on the head.

As he spun around in a circle, Bryant solicited congratulations from those around him.

"Who wants to wish me congratulations?" he asked fellow revelers who were walking by, before posing for several selfies.

"You know what, I can't believe I got this."

No one named Terry Bryant won an Oscar on Sunday.

Prosecutors want to paint Cosby as big Hollywood predator

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (AP)—Stung by a hung jury the first time around, prosecutors are pushing to widen the scope of Bill Cosby's looming retrial to spotlight allegations he is one of the biggest serial predators in a Hollywood suddenly aware of sexual misconduct in the #MeToo era.

The 80-year-old Cosby will be back in a suburban Philadelphia courtroom on Tuesday as his lawyers try to convince a judge to block some of his dozens of accusers from testifying against him at his April 2 retrial.

Prosecutors want as many as 19 of Cosby's accusers to take the stand as they attempt to show the comedian had a long history of drugging and attacking women. They also are trying to insulate the accuser in his lone criminal case, Andrea Constand, from what a prosecutor called the defense's "inevitable attacks" on her credibility.

Cosby's lawyers have argued in writing that some of the aspiring actresses, flight attendants and other women the prosecution wants to call have allegations dating to the 1960s that are impossible to defend against. Some witnesses are dead, memories are shot and evidence has been lost, the lawyers argued.

Prosecutors made their case on Monday for allowing the women, including model Janice Dickinson, to testify. It was the first day of what is scheduled to be a two-day pretrial hearing.

Allowing the women to take the stand would show jurors that Cosby "systematically engaged in a signature pattern of providing an intoxicant to his young female victim and then sexually assaulting her when she became incapacitated," Assistant District Attorney Adrienne D. Jappe argued.

Judge Steven O'Neill said he would not rule on whether to allow the testimony by the end of the hearing, calling it an "extraordinarily weighty issue" that he needs time to review.

O'Neill allowed just one other accuser to take the stand at Cosby's first trial last year, barring any mention of about 60 others who have come forward to accuse Cosby in recent years.

The only other hint that jurors got of Cosby's past came from deposition excerpts from 2005 and 2006 in which the star admitted giving quaaludes to women he wanted to have sex with.

That jury deadlocked, setting the stage for the retrial.

Cosby has pleaded not guilty to charges he assaulted Constand, a Temple University women's basketball administrator, while he was a powerful alumnus and trustee. He has said the encounter was consensual. He remains free on bail.

Cosby's revamped defense team, led by former Michael Jackson lawyer Tom Mesereau, argued Monday that telephone records, travel itineraries and other evidence show the alleged assault could not have happened in January 2004, when Constand says it did, and thus falls outside the statute of limitations.

Oscar ratings plunge to a record low

NEW YORK (AP)—Television viewers could barely stifle a yawn for Hollywood's biggest night, with the Academy Awards plunging to a record-low viewership of 26.5 million people.

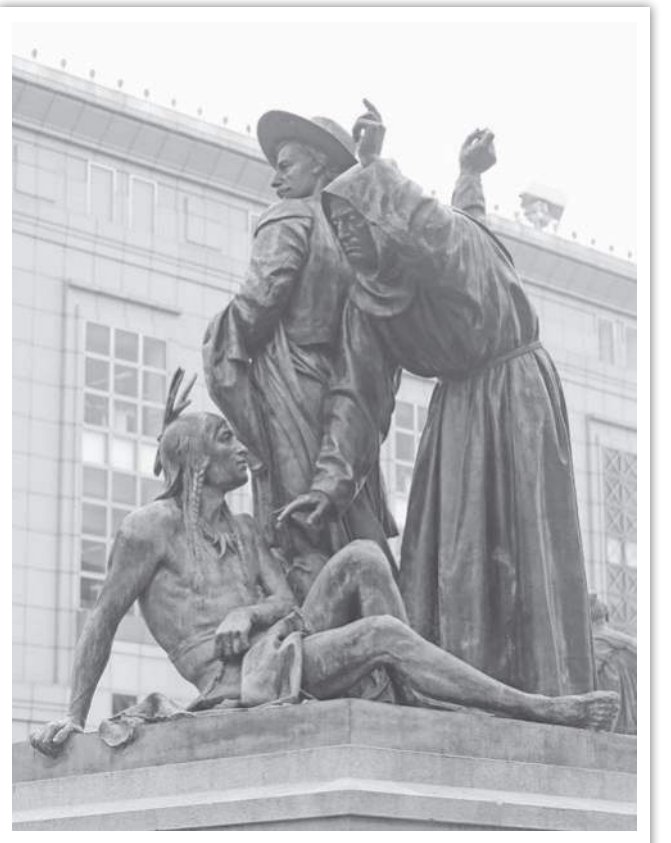
The Nielsen company said that's a 20 percent drop from the 33 million who watched the 2017 show, which was also hosted by Jimmy Kimmel. Oscar viewership is often tied to the box office muscle of the big nominees, and best picture winner "The Shape of Water" only grossed $57.4 million in the United States.

It's the first time the Oscars have drawn fewer than 30 million people, in Nielsen records that go back to 1974. The Academy Awards are often the most-watched television program of the year after the Super Bowl, but this year's Winter Olympics opening ceremony from Pyeongchang reached 27.8 million.

The previous low-water mark for the Oscars came in 2008, when "No Country For Old Men" won best picture.

Only four years ago the Oscar reached nearly 44 million viewers. The biggest Academy Awards audience on record came in 1998, when the blockbuster "Titanic" was named best picture.

The Academy Awards can keep bragging rights over other awards shows. The Golden Globes reached 19 million viewers in January and the Grammys had an audience of 19.8 million, Nielsen said.



DOWN WITH DISCRIMINATION AP

This Friday, March 2, 2018 photo shows a statue of a Native American below Sir Francis Drake and Father Junipero Serra in San Francisco. San Francisco's arts commission is considering removing a statue that some say is degrading to Native Americans. The city's arts commission is scheduled to discuss the sculpture Monday and has the final say on its fate.

Memories of long-ago assault revived by #MeToo movement

DEAR ABBY: Years ago, my husband and I hosted a St. Patrick's Day party in our apartment for friends. There was a lot of drinking going on. I had to be at work early the next morning, so I went to bed while the party went on. I awoke a short while later to one of the men attempting to rape me. He stopped and attempted an apology by saying, "But you are just so pretty."

My husband and I graduated from high school with this person, and he is/was part of the same circle of friends. I have not told many people, but the few who do know have maintained a friendship with him, including my husband.

Because of the #MeToo campaign, all the emotions have come to a head for me now. I think about this assault daily. The worst thing for me is that even though he knows about it, my husband has chosen to remain friends with him for 35 years. How can I get past this?

CAN'T FORGET IN VIRGINIA

DEAR CAN'T FORGET: I can only imagine how traumatic the assault was, and for that you have my sympathy. The friends you confided in may feel that because your attacker was drunk, what he did was somehow excusable. That your husband would be so forgiving is, frankly, shocking.

It may take the help of a licensed mental health professional to put this behind you, if that's possible. I sincerely hope you will reach out to a therapist who treats post-traumatic stress as well as victims of sexual assault, and include your husband in some of the sessions.

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 55-year-old gay man with a problem. My 22-year-old son doesn't know I'm gay. It was after my divorce that I started seeing men again.

I married my life partner of 13 years last year. My husband thinks I should sit my son down and tell him. I want to tell my son and be honest with him about my relationship with my husband, but my son is very religious and I'm afraid this will drive a wedge between us. Plus, I'm afraid of what ideas my ex would fill his head with about me. Please advise.

CONFUSED IN THE SOUTH

DEAR CONFUSED: You say your son is 22 and you have been with your now-husband for 13 years. Haven't you had regular visitation with your son all this time? Doesn't he like your husband? If the answers to those questions are yes, then what makes you think he isn't already aware of your sexual orientation? On the other hand, if the answers to my questions are no, then I doubt that telling your son what's what will drive him any further away from you than he already is.

DEAR ABBY: What would you say about a man who still keeps a photo of himself with his late wife as his computer background picture two years after he remarried?

SECOND-FIDDLE SECOND WIFE

DEAR WIFE: I'd say he may be too lazy or computer-inept to update it. If it were me, I'd "volunteer" to help him change it.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

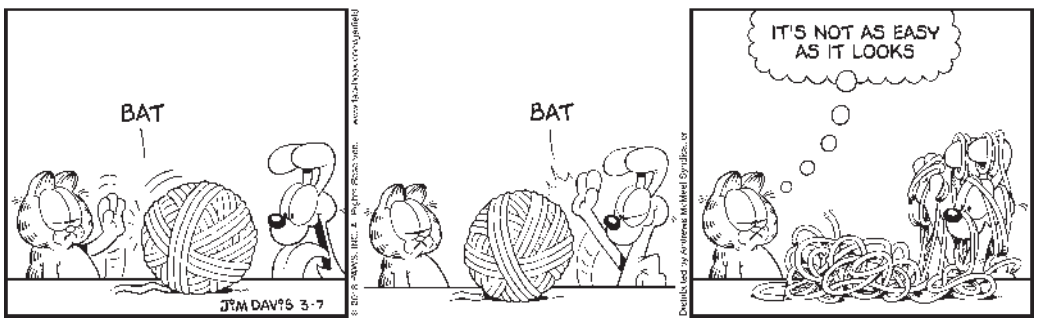
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

I WISH I WAS A TIGER.
A COMMON LAMENT.
I'VE GOT AN IDEA! YOU CAN TEACH ME TO BE A TIGER! I'VE GOT SOME RED SLEEPERS I CAN WEAR! HANG ON!
SEE? WE CAN MAKE A TAIL BY STUFFING A KNEE SOCK AND PINNING IT ON MY REAR! THEN YOU CAN DRAW STRIPES ON MY FACE!
HMM... WHAT ABOUT FUR AND WHISKERS?
I HAVEN'T SHAVED FOR SIX YEARS. I SEEM TO BE CURSED WITH A THIN BEARD.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

I'M NOT SURE THIS SLEEP DEPRIVATION EXPERIMENT IS WORKING.
WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?
I HAVEN'T FALLEN ASLEEP OR DONE ANY GREAT WRITING YET.
PLUS, I THINK I'M HALLUCINATING.
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK SO?
WELL, THE TALKING CARTOON MONKEY FOR STARTERS.
NONSENSE. ARE YOU GONNA FINISH THAT BANANA?
3-7

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

I GOT A LETTER FROM MY UNCLE DARRELL IN PRISON.
HE'S BEEN PUT IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.
FOR BEING DISRUPTIVE?
NO, FOR EATING THREE HELPINGS OF CAFETERIA CHILI.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Zing
4 Uppity one
8 U2 lead singer
12 High card
13 Ringlet
14 "Frozen" snowman
15 Samovar
16 Fancy burger ingredient
18 Moon-related
20 Tease
21 Sir's counterpart
24 Roly-poly
28 Youngster on base
32 Canal of song
33 Corp. boss
34 Begets
36 Econ. statistic
37 Harangue
39 George Eliot novel
41 Cybermessages
43 "Who —?"
44 Soccer's Hamm
46 Midday meal
50 Ephemeral jacuzzi sight
55 "Caught ya!"
56 "Got it"
57 "Star Wars" princess
58 Actor McKellen
59 Entryway
60 Tend texts
61 Cover

DOWN
1 One of the Fab Four
2 Beige
3 Ivy League team
4 Egyptian amulets
5 Convent manager
6 Assoc.
7 Fuzzy image
8 Infielder's flub
9 Flamenco cheer
10 Scot's refusal
11 Not on
17 Use a straw
19 "Little Women" woman
22 Operatic solo
23 — Gras
25 Desire
26 Behave
27 Le Pew of cartoons
28 Farm unit
29 500 sheets
30 "— Lisa"
31 Afternoon affairs
35 Greet with a grin
38 Lumberjack's call
40 A/C stat
42 Actress Lucy
45 Competent
47 Hammer's target
48 Spiced tea
49 Poker holding
50 Succor
51 Equi-
52 Old Oldsmobile
53 Nap site
54 Half of CIV

Solution time: 23 mins.

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D	A	C	H	S	H	U	N	D		E	E	K
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B	U	E	S		D	O	B	C	R	M	A	N
I	S	M		S	A	V	O	R		A	I	F
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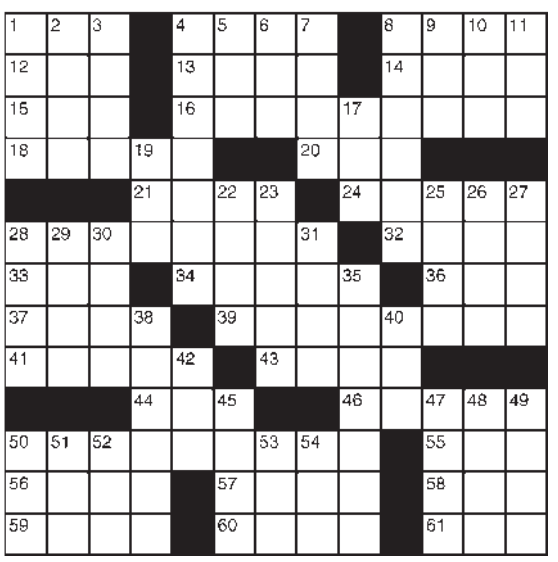
Yesterday's answer 3-7



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Laura Prepon, 38; Jenna Fischer, 43; Rachel Weisz, 48; Bryan Cranston, 62.

Happy Birthday: Ongoing money, health and legal matters can be resolved this year. Your insight and determination will help you reach goals that were impossible in the past. Stay focused on what you are trying to accomplish and be ready to say "no" to anyone who tries to take over or come between you and your success. Negotiate on your own behalf. Your numbers are 2, 14, 20, 24, 32, 37, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Don't leave anything to chance or up to someone else's discretion. Know what you want and make a concerted effort to reach your destination. Travel and communication will have a positive effect on your beliefs and attitude. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* If you love someone, let them know. The difference it will make to your relationship will help you move forward with your life. Learn from the experience and don't be afraid to let others know your thoughts and feelings. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Start looking into new beginnings and opportunities through old sources. Reconnect with someone you have worked with in the past, and you will be offered information that can help you get ahead. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Don't overreact. If something isn't going your way, make changes and be willing to compromise in order to move forward. Excessive behavior may be tempting, but in the end you'll wish you had been more moderate. Protect against injury. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Make positive changes to the way you look, what you know and how you decide to move forward. Avoid indulgent individuals and obsessive behavior. Fitness, health and proper diet should be a priority. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Don't say no to change. Listen to the suggestions and advice offered. Be willing to put in the time and physical labor necessary in order to cut costs. Sharing the space you create with someone you love will improve your personal life. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Personal fitness, health and proper diet are featured. Start a new routine that will encourage you to be the best you can be. Share your thoughts and you'll find solutions. Trust in your ability to make the best choice possible. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Let your creative imagination lead the way, and you'll come up with a plan or idea that will lead to new friendships, information and personal gains. Share your thoughts and feelings with someone you love and trust. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Don't share secrets. Someone will take advantage of you if you exaggerate regarding your finances, feelings or capabilities. Concentrate on personal change and living up to your dreams, not trying to impress others. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Revise your qualifications. Wheel and deal and be receptive to an unusual offer. Your willingness to work hard and the experience you have to offer will lead to an interesting turn of events. Set a goal and strive to reach it. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Too much will end up weighing you down. Stick to what you know and understand. Don't get caught up in what someone else is into. Moderation is necessary, and being an observer rather than a player for the time being is encouraged. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Stand up and be counted. You can get ahead if you physically pursue what excites you the most. Financial gain is within reach and a decision will fall in your favor. Don't back down. Go after what you want. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are mysterious, possessive and unique. You are engaging and empathetic.

To submit astrological questions to the "Dear Eugenia" column, visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

9		7				3		
	3		1		8		7	
		8				6		
	7		9		5		3	1
				3				
	4	9	8	1	7	2	6	
		3				7		
		6				8		
			6	9	4			

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/07

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	3	7	2	9	1	4	6	8
9	2	1	8	6	4	3	5	7
4	6	8	3	5	7	9	1	2
3	9	6	4	1	2	7	8	5
8	5	4	6	7	9	2	3	1
7	1	2	5	8	3	6	9	4
6	8	9	7	4	5	1	2	3
1	4	3	9	2	8	5	7	6
2	7	5	1	3	6	8	4	9

Difficulty level ★★ 2/07

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

THIS IS HOW WE 'ROLL' Solution: 4 letters

Y	C	S	C	A	B	B	A	G	E	G	G	S	L	S
L	R	A	N	W	S	P	R	I	N	G	R	O	L	L
S	L	T	R	A	D	A	L	I	H	C	N	E	O	G
L	N	A	S	P	E	P	U	N	C	H	E	S	R	N
L	P	I	B	A	E	J	U	C	H	P	S	D	K	I
O	R	E	P	A	P	T	E	L	I	O	T	T	N	L
B	R	E	A	D	R	I	L	N	M	G	N	C	A	L
S	R	A	C	O	S	O	G	O	I	O	A	O	B	O
T	S	L	L	T	R	B	I	M	C	S	T	R	R	R
E	E	L	O	Y	A	Ⓜ	J	A	H	U	R	I	S	R
R	H	O	A	G	S	Ⓞ	E	N	A	S	O	F	O	E
O	T	P	R	F	S	Ⓥ	L	N	N	H	L	L	C	N
C	O	O	F	C	E	Ⓔ	L	I	G	I	L	O	K	O
K	L	U	M	O	N	E	Y	C	A	U	S	O	S	T
E	C	A	N	N	O	L	I	E	P	N	O	R	I	S

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Ball, Bankroll, Bread, Cabbage, Call, Cannoli, Carpet, Cars, Cash, Chimichanga, Cigars, Cinnamon, Clothes, Cuffs, Eggs, Enchilada, Eyes, Floor, Honor, Jeans, Jelly, Lobster, Logs, Money, Motion, Move, Nori, Nut Roll, Oats, Pastry, Payroll, Pins, Punches, Rock, Role, Rolling, Rollup, Sleeping Bag, Socks, Spring Roll, Stone, Sushi, Toilet Paper, Tootsie, Trolls, Wrap

Yesterday's Answer: Coal

Treasuries 13 through 29 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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HILL LAW OFFICES
Susupe Village
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Tel: (670) 234-6806/7743 Fax: (670) 234-7753

Attorney for Petitioner
Ramona B. Dela Cruz

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: JESUS M. DELA CRUZ, DECEASED.	Civil Action No. 18-0084 NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ALL HEIRS, CLAIMANTS AND CREDITORS OF THE DECEDENT, JESUS M. DELA CRUZ OR HIS ESTATE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Petitioner, Ramona B. Dela Cruz, has filed with the Clerk of this Court a Petition for Letters of Administration for the estate of Jesus M. Dela Cruz, deceased. The attorney of record is Jose Hill of Joe Hill Law Offices, P.O. Box 500917, Saipan, MP 96950.

The said Petition is set for hearing on April 5, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. before the Superior Court in Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear at the said scheduled hearing.

Any all persons, creditors or entities having daims against the Decedent or the Estate of Jesus M. Dela Cruz, or his Estate, are hereby required by law to file their daims with the Clerk of the Superior Court within sixty (60) days of the publication of this notice, or the claim(s) will be forever barred.

A copy of your daim(s) should also be sent to the attorney for Petitioner/Administratrix, Ramona B. Dela Cruz, Joe Hill, Joe Hill Law offices, whose address is Tokcha Avenue at Lulai Wy, Susupe, P.O. Box 500917, Saipan, MP 96950.

Dated this 5th day of March, 2018.

/s/ Clerk of Court
Superior Court

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Commonwealth Judiciary Administrative Office
Guma' Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165, Saipan MP 96950
Telephone (670) 236-9715 Facsimile (670)236-9702

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB18-JUDICIARY-02
SUBMISSION DATE: April 6, 2018 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF MICROSOFT OFFICE 2016"
FOR THE CNMI Judiciary, Judicial Administrative Office"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE CASHIER WINDOW, DOOR #5, LOCATED AT THE GUMA HUSTISIA / IIMWAL AWEEWE / HOUSE OF JUSTICE, SUSUPE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO
JUDICIARY EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY

/s/JOHN T. VILLAGOMEZ
JUDICIARY PROCUREMENT OFFICER

JESUSA C. ATALIG, Chairwoman | RODNEY S. CABARLES, Vice-Chairman | PORSHA H. PALACIOS, Secretary | JOVITA SN. PAULINO, Acting Treasurer | BOARD MEMBER, Vacant

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
TINIAN MUNICIPAL SCHOLARSHIP BOARD
Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
PO Box 520059 • San Jose Village • Tinian, MP 96952
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Email: tinianscholarship@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC §9910(a), the Tinian Municipal Scholarship Board hereby gives notice that there will be a Regular Meeting on Saturday, March 10, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the Northern Marianas College, Tinian campus, building B (room E) in San Jose Village, Tinian.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes
   October 21, 2017 Special Meeting
   January 31, 2018 which went on recess and reconvened on January 31 & February 06, 2018.
   February 20, 2018

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS[1]
III. NEW BUSINESS
Review current Rules & Regulation
Discussion regarding (1) denied applicant
IV. MISCELLANEOUS MATTER
V. SCHEDULE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING
VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION[2]
VII. ADJOURNMENT

/s/ Jesusa C. Atalig
Chairwoman[1]

[1] We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments on the day of the meeting.
[2] Pursuant to 1 CMC section 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.
[3] Individuals with special needs requiring special accommodations, please contact the TMSB office at least 48 hours prior to schedule meeting for assistance.

Salty Saipan Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(1) General Maintenance
Minimum Qualifications: High school graduate; one (1) year of paid experience as a General Building Structure Maintenance worker in position(s) requiring knowledge of rough and finish carpentry, plumbing, interior and exterior painting and electrician skills; one (1) year of experience as a commercial cleaner, preferably in hotel, lodge or single structure housekeeping setting(s). Experience with use of pesticides and fertilizers and how to avoid the hazardous affect of common chemicals used for building maintenance and repair.
Duties: Ensures that a newly constructed building structure and its surrounding area are maintained in a clean and orderly condition and good repair. Cleans rooms and yard areas; strips and applies wax to floors; shampoos carpets; washes and paints interior and exterior walls; diagnoses and cures building plumbing, electrical and carpentry repair needs. Assesses and completes laundry needs. Operates water blaster and bush whacker.

(1) Cook
Knowledgeable in Western, Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Filipino Cuisine. At least one (1) year work-related experience. Certified Graduate from a Culinary Institute. Drug Testing & Police Clearance Required.

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Minimum IT industry experience (5 years minimum) required; thorough knowledge of all software and hardware is required, this includes all Microsoft Windows desktop and server operating systems, Microsoft application support, SQL 2017 & Oracle database administration skills and corporate anti-virus software, Access database and Active Directory 2012 experience is highly desirable. Experience in the use of electronic mail (mail relays, spam filters and mail integrity) and Internet protocols (e.g. TCP/IP, PPP, and IMAP). Sound knowledge of routers, firewalls, network security, network configuration, switches and fiber is required. Applicant should have in-depth knowledge of VPN, VPN encryption, PC and server hardware, new PC and server installations, configuration and support, System backups and general network administration. Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to support a 24hr business are also essential. A+, Network +, and/or MCP certification are also highly desirable.

Applications must be received by 5:00pm
on Tuesday, March 20th 2018.
PIC applications are available at the PIC Security Desk by the Loading Dock/Employee Entrance.
Incomplete applications will NOT be accepted or considered.
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REFUNDS

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NFL salary cap increases to $177.2M

NEW YORK (AP) — The NFL's salary cap has been set at $177.2 million per team in 2018, up from $167 million last year, using a calculation based on the league's revenue.

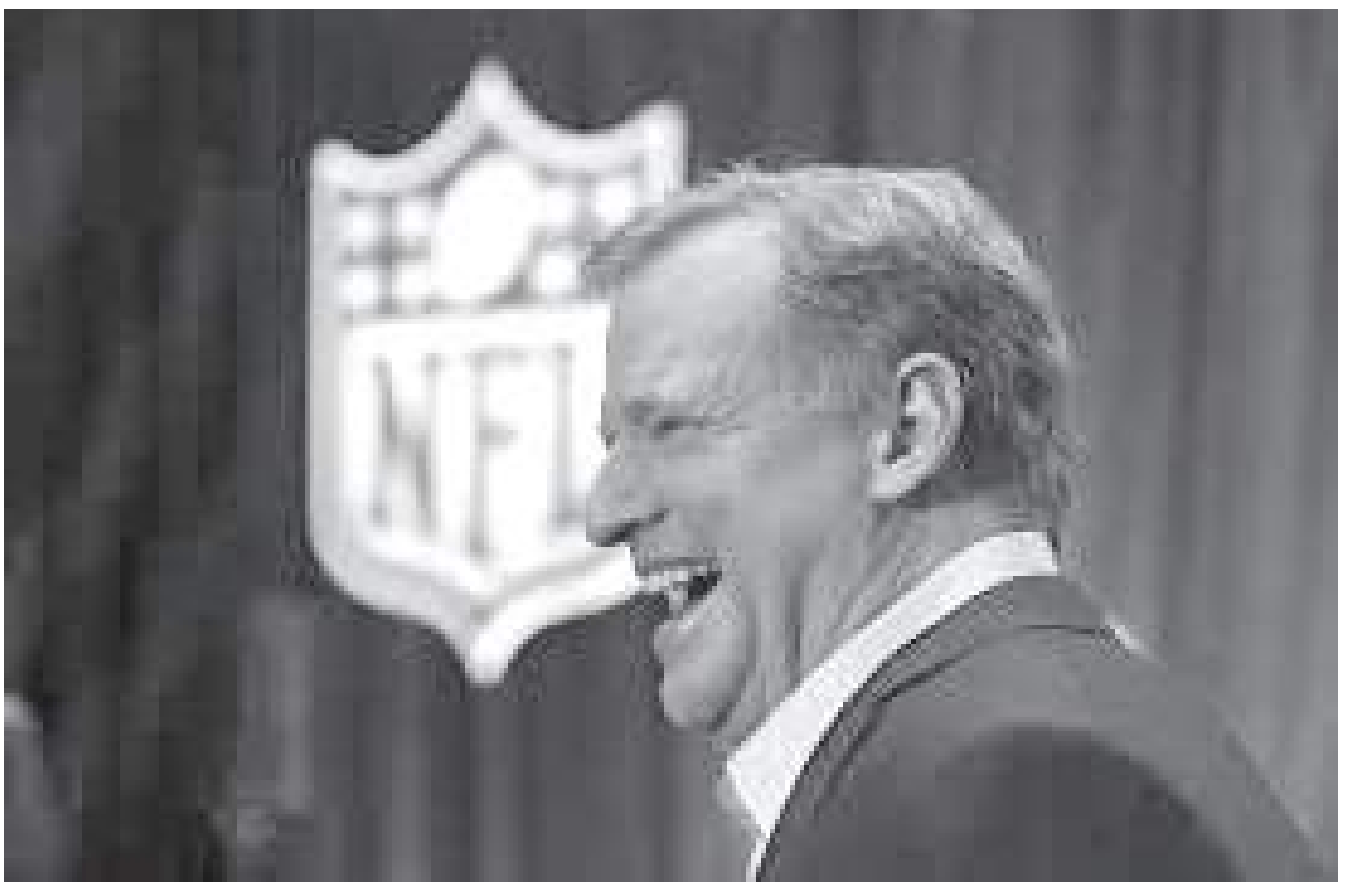
This is the fifth straight year the salary cap has increased by at least $10 million. The 6.11 percent increase is the smallest percent increase for the cap from year to year since 2013's 1.99 percent jump.

But since 2013, the cap has risen more than $54 million, from $123 million to $177.2 million, an increase of 44.1 percent.

Teams were notified of the salary cap and the numbers for franchise tag designations on Monday. There is an exception for players franchised for a second straight year.

The NFL's collective bargaining agreement allows teams to carry over unused cap space from one year to the next. It also establishes a spending floor. Every four years, teams must spend at least 89 percent of their cap space in cash to avoid a CBA violation.

Free agency begins on March 14, with the start of the NFL's new league year. Teams that are over the cap must clear salary by that date. Currently, three teams are over the cap: the Philadelphia Eagles ($11,210,390 over), the Miami Dolphins ($8,874,165 over) and the Kansas City Chiefs ($3,285,981 over).



AP

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell laughs while talking with former head coach Tony Dungy before a news conference in advance of the Super Bowl 52 football game, Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2018, in Minneapolis.

The Cleveland Browns have the most room under the cap, with $108 million to spend.

Meanwhile, in Dallas, the Cowboys placed the franchise tag on DeMarcus Lawrence on Monday, and the Pro Bowl defensive end quickly signed the one-year contract that guarantees him $17.1 million in 2018.

The Cowboys had until Tuesday to put the tag on Lawrence, who can still sign a long-term deal with the club that traded up him to get him early in the second round in 2014. Lawrence's agent, David Canter, wrote on Twitter that his client signed the deal.

Lawrence tied All-Pro Calais Campbell of Jacksonville for second in the NFL with 14+ sacks last season. The 25-year-old's breakout year came after he struggled with injuries most of his first three seasons. He had back surgery each of the previous two offseasons.

On the one-year contract, Lawrence's salary would be the average of the NFL's five highest-paid defensive ends.

Lawrence is an important piece with the Cowboys trying to get back to the playoffs after missing at 9-7 a year after they had an NFC-best 13 wins before losing a divisional playoff to Green Bay.

The former Boise State player emerged for a Dallas defense that has lacked star power beyond 2016 All-Pro linebacker Sean Lee. Lawrence surpassed his previous career high of eight sacks in the fifth game.

Pass rushing was a problem for the Cowboys in each of their past two trips to the playoffs. In 2014, they finished 28th in sacks and couldn't get to a hobbled Aaron Rodgers in a divisional loss to the Packers after Lawrence clinched a wild-card win over Detroit with a sack of Matthew Stafford.

In the rematch with Rodgers, Dallas sacked him three times but couldn't get a stop in the final minutes of a 34-31 loss in January 2017.

Lawrence broke a foot in training camp his rookie year, missing half the season. His second year was Lawrence's only full season, when he had 31 QB pressures to go with the eight sacks.

After serving a four-game drug suspension to start 2016, he had three sacks in nine games before missing the final three regular-season games with a back injury. He played in the divisional loss to the Packers.

In Atlanta, the Falcons have agreed to terms on a three-year contract extension with kicker Matt Bryant.

The Falcons announced the agreement before Bryant could become a free agent on March 14.

In nine seasons with the Falcons, Bryant has made 88.1 percent of his field goal attempts—230 of 261— and has missed only one of 340 extra points.

Bryant, who will turn 43 on May 29, made 34 of 37 field goals in 2016 and 34 of 39 in 2017. He made eight of nine field goals from at least 50 yards last season.

Bryant passed Morten Andersen to become the team's all-time scoring leader in 2016, when Bryant was named to his first Pro Bowl.

Mickelson wants more after win in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Phil Mickelson knew this was coming, even when he had so little to show for it.

Mickelson had gone 101 tournaments around the world since he last won at Muirfield in the 2013 British Open, which moved him to No. 2 in the world and gave him the third leg of the career Grand Slam. In more than two decades on the PGA Tour, he had gone only two seasons without winning.

And then it was up to four straight years and counting.

There was more frustration than self-doubt. And with Mickelson, even at age 47, there was never a loss of confidence.

"I knew that wasn't going to be my last one, no," he said Sunday. "And this isn't either."

The most recent one came in the high altitude of the Mexico Championship, and it was another pulsating performance, as often is the case with Mickelson.

Five birdies in the opening 10 holes gave him the lead. Right when he was on the verge of taking control, he went for the green on the par-5 11th hole only for the shot to carom off a tree and into the bushes near the edge of Chapultepec Golf Club. Deep in the bushes, he blasted out and hit the crowd. He wound up making bogey. Then came another wild drive that bounced along the cart path, forcing him to scramble for par.

Three groups ahead of him, Justin Thomas delivered the shot of the tournament. Eleven shots behind going into the weekend and suddenly tied for the lead, Thomas holed out from 119 yards on the final hole for eagle to cap off a 62-64 weekend as he went for his second straight victory.

"I didn't know that he holed out," Mickelson said. "I just saw that he finished at 16 under when I was playing the 15th, and that meant that I needed to birdie two to get even with him."

And that's what he did. A perfect drive and a 6-iron for a two-putt birdie, and then a 20-foot birdie on the 16th.

Mickelson closed with a 66 and headed to a sudden-death playoff with Thomas, a duel between players separated by 23 years of age. Missing from the group was Tyrrell Hatton, who delivered his own charge with four straight 3s on his card, the last one an eagle to tie for the lead. But he missed the 18th green with a wedge, chipped strong and missed the par putt.

The sudden-death playoff ended quickly. Thomas went long with a gap wedge to the par-3 17th and chipped to 10 feet short of the hole. Mickelson hit the green, narrowly missed the birdie putt and walked off a winner—finally—when Thomas missed his putt.

The disappointment was tempered by the guy who beat him.

Mickelson took interest in Thomas before he even reached the PGA Tour. They played a practice round at the 2014 U.S. Open, and Mickelson said that day to the media, "You'll get to know Justin Thomas soon enough."

Thomas, the PGA Tour player of the year last season and already a two-time winner this season, moved to No. 2 in the world.

He is the type of player—along with Dustin Johnson, Jordan Spieth, Jon Rahm, Jason Day and Rory McIlroy—who represent a powerful young generation that Mickelson now has to beat if he wants to reach one of his goals.

Mickelson, who captured his third World Golf Championship, now has 43 victories on the PGA Tour. The first was in 1991—before Thomas, Spieth and Rahm were even born—when he was an amateur. He has long said he wants to get to 50.

The more pertinent number might be 48. That's how old Mickelson will be in June. No one has won more than five times on the PGA Tour after turning 47.

"Oh, I will," Mickelson said about reaching 50 titles. "I'll get there."

That's not all he wants. One of his chief goals for the year was to be on his 12th consecutive Ryder Cup team for a chance to win in Europe, which he has never done. The victory should be enough to move him to No. 4 in the standings. Given his value in the team room, winning the Mexico Championship makes it hard to overlook Mickelson.

DeJong, Cardinals agree to $26 million, 6-year deal

JUPITER, Fla. (AP)—Less than a year after making his big league debut, Paul DeJong was rewarded with a long-term deal. And that was worth hugs all around.

The shortstop and the St. Louis Cardinals agreed Monday to a $26 million, six-year contract that includes team options for 2024 and 2025.

"It gives me a sense of security, just knowing that I'm going to be here and kind of just confirms my thoughts about wanting to be a Cardinal for my life," DeJong said. "To me to be able to sign a potentially eight-year deal just seems like I'm cementing myself in the Cardinals organization. I don't ever want to leave."

The 24-year-old hugged his parents and grandparents before the news conference to announce the deal.

DeJong made his major league debut last May 28 and hit .285 with a team-high 25 homers and 65 RBI in 108 games. He was selected by St. Louis from Illinois State in the fourth round of the 2015 draft.

DeJong played only 246 minor league games. Batting mostly third, he hit .298 with eight homers in July.

"As you know, we're committed to winning at the major league level through scouting and player development, and Paul is a great example of this," owner Bill DeWitt Jr. said.

DeJong's deal covers up to four years of arbitration eligibility and the options extend to two years of free agent eligibility.

St. Louis started nine different shortstops over the past 10 opening days, including Pete Kozma (2013), Rafael Furcal (2012), Ryan Theriot (2011) and Khalil Greene (2009).

LeBron, Nance power Cavaliers past Pistons

AP
Cleveland Cavaliers' Larry Nance Jr. (22) drives against Detroit Pistons' James Ennis (33) in the first half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, March 5, 2018, in Cleveland.

CLEVELAND (AP)—LeBron James scored 31 points before taking a seat on the bench, Larry Nance Jr. reached career highs with 22 points and 15 rebounds in his first start for Cleveland, and the Cavaliers closed a disappointing five-game homestand on a positive note with a 112-90 win Monday night over the Detroit Pistons, who haven't won on the road in nearly two months.

With Cleveland missing three big men —All-Star Kevin Love, Tristan Thompson and Jeff Green—because of injuries, the Cavs needed someone to step up and Nance came through. Wearing the same No. 22 his father had retired by Cleveland, the 25-year-old Nance had the best game of his young career.

James was his usual brilliant self, making 5 of 7 3-pointers and adding seven rebounds and seven assists. With the Cavs comfortably ahead, James sat the entire fourth quarter, a rarity in this odd season.

Blake Griffin scored 25 to lead Detroit, which has lost nine straight away from home. The Pistons haven't won on the road since Jan. 10. Andre Drummond scored 15 but didn't reach double-digit rebounds for the first time in 19 games.

Cleveland's frontcourt injuries forced Cavs coach Tyronn Lue to change his starting lineup yet again. Lue moved Nance into Thompson's spot and started Rodney Hood over rookie Cedi Osman, whose energy had given Cleveland's first unit a needed lift.

It was only one game, but Cleveland's latest look was encouraging. The Cavs have been in a funk lately as they try to integrate four new players, but they got a win before embarking on a two-week, six-game trip.

James led the way, but it was Nance who helped negate Detroit's size advantage and made several big plays. By halftime, Nance had matched his career best with 18 points.

And for the second straight game, Nance upstaged James with a sensational dunk.

J.R. Smith scooped a pass toward the rim that Nance grabbed with one hand and slammed home, triggering another eruption from the crowd and his teammates on the bench.

Celtics 105, Bulls 89

In Chicago, Jaylen Brown scored 21 points and Boston pounded Chicago even though Kyrie Irving sat out because of a sore left knee.

Even without their All-Star guard, the Celtics took control right from the start and led by as many as 37 en route to their fifth win in six games.

Jayson Tatum added 14 points, while Al Horford and Terry Rozier scored 13 apiece for Boston.

The Bulls lost for the 14th time in 17 games. Denzel Valentine scored 20 points and nailed four 3-pointers for Chicago, but that was about the only positive for the Bulls.

Spurs 100, Grizzlies 98

In San Antonio, Tony Parker had 23 points, sparking San Antonio to a needed victory over Memphis before embarking on a difficult road trip.

Memphis has lost 14 straight, but San Antonio's recent skid has had a greater impact on the Western Conference playoff picture. The Spurs had dropped eight of 10 and fallen from third to sixth in the crowded West, putting them at risk of missing the postseason for the first time in 21 years.

San Antonio moved up a spot to fifth place ahead of Minnesota with the victory.

Davis Bertans added 17 points and Danny Green had 14 for the Spurs, who snapped a four-game losing streak at home.

Trail Blazers 108, Lakers 103

In Los Angeles, Damian Lillard scored 19 of his 39 points in the fourth quarter and Portland won its 15th consecutive game over Los Angeles.

Lillard scored 15 in a row for the Trail Blazers down the stretch, giving them a 104-103 with 1:08 remaining by knowing down 1 of 2 free throws.

CJ McCollum had 22 points, and Jusuf Nurkic added 16 points and 16 rebounds.

Julius Randle had 21 points and nine rebounds for the Lakers, who had their five-game winning streak ended. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope had 16 points, and Lonzo Ball had 10 points, two rebounds and two assists.

Heat 125, Suns 103

In Miami, Hassan Whiteside had 24 points and 14 rebounds, Goran Dragic scored 17 and Miami moved into the No. 7 spot in the Eastern Conference by topping Phoenix.

Whiteside had his highest-scoring game since Jan. 29, making 10 of his 13 shots. He averaged only 12.2 points on 48-percent shooting in his most recent 12 games.

Kelly Olynyk scored 15 points for the Heat, who gave four of their starters—Whiteside included—the entire fourth quarter off and beat the Suns for the 18th time in their last 20 meetings.

Dwyane Wade, Josh Richardson, Justise Winslow and Luke Babbitt each had 12 for the Heat, which had seven players in double figures.

Pacers 92, Bucks 89

In Indianapolis, Bojan Bogdanovic tied his season high with 29 points and grabbed a key jump ball late to lift Indiana over Milwaukee.

Milwaukee's Khris Middleton stole Victor Oladipo's pass with 10 seconds left and Indiana leading 90-89. He rushed to the basket, but Cory Joseph chased him down and got a hand on the basketball before Middleton could attempt a shot. The ball rolled out of bounds, and referees called a jump ball after video replay. Bogdanovic came down with the tip off the jump ball and added a pair of free throws with six seconds left.

Thaddeus Young had 10 points and seven rebounds, and Oladipo finished with 14 points, five assists and five rebounds along with 10 turnovers.

Jazz 94, Magic 80

In Salt Lake City, Rudy Gobert had 21 points and 17 rebounds to lead Utah over Orlando.

Donovan Mitchell scored 19 points and Joe Ingles added 18 points, eight assists and seven rebounds for the Jazz, who have won three in a row and 15 of 17. Still, the Jazz sit 1 1/2 games outside the eighth playoff spot in the Western Conference.

Nikola Vucevic had 15 points— most coming from the perimeter outside Gobert's reach, including three 3s—and 12 rebounds while Aaron Gordon had 13 points for the Magic.

NBA may help end college hoops scandal

NEW YORK (AP)—With LeBron James and Barack Obama both broaching the subject last week amid the pay-for-play college basketball scandal, it was only a matter of time before momentum swung toward an NBA-led alternative, especially since commissioner Adam Silver has broached the subject in recent years.

As it turns out, momentum was already building before James and Obama floated the idea.

The NBA is preparing to go into business with high school graduates again. The reported plan, at least in its infant stages, would allow 18-year-olds to enter the draft or join the G League on a livable wage. The NBA would also establish contact points with players even earlier in their prep careers, but would not go so far as establishing a EuroLeague-style farm system.

"We are looking at changing the relationship we have with players before they reach the NBA," an anonymously sourced high-ranking league official said. "This is a complex challenge, and there's still a lot of discussion about how it's going to happen, but we all see the need to step in."

Silver could unveil a new plan as soon as this summer, after the Commission on College Basketball concludes its investigation into the NCAA corruption scandal, according to the ESPN report. The commission, chaired by former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, is tasked with recommending sweeping reform to fix a broken college basketball system. Whether that includes paying student athletes, a notion NCAA president Mark Emmert has staunchly opposed, could impact the NBA's plan.

In the 2005 collective bargaining agreement, the NBA abolished a rule that allowed prep prospects to jump straight to the league, restricting the draft-eligible age to 19 or one year removed from high school graduation. This essentially created the one-and-done phenomenon that plagues the NCAA.

Recently, Silver has been more open about the league's intent to end the one-and-done rule, but the league set aside that discussion during the latest round of collective bargaining with the players' union. This isn't a quick fix, not when the NBA has bigger plans than just going back to the old system.

Elite prospects have always been paid under the table, but what was once a hushed understanding became impossible to keep quiet once enough people got their hands in an ever-increasing pot of money. A recent FBI investigation sounded the alarm on NBA agents, college coaches, shoe executives, financial advisers, travel ball officials and everyone else influencing teenage basketball sensations.

By taking the lid off the jar and getting everything out into the open, the NBA could take advantage of a more transparent process. While 18-year-olds can join the G League now, they are restricted to a maximum salary of $26,000, so a handful of prospects—led by Brandon Jennings in 2008—have sought six or seven-figure contracts overseas instead. Increased salaries could keep those players and more at home, and you can imagine the increased interest in the G League with an influx of talent.

With the ability to develop talent outside of NBA rosters, where immature players from Kwame Brown to Robert Swift may have been failed by a professional atmosphere they weren't prepared for, the league might also benefit from grooming potential NBA prospects to capitalize on their opportunity.

Special prizes at stake in Saipan Marathon

The Marianas Visitors Authority is reminding runners for this Saturday's Saipan Marathon 2018 to register by tomorrow for a chance to win great place cash prizes and other prizes for a number of new wacky contests.

"We've got the $22,000 plus in cash prizes for the fastest runners, and the good news is, we've got prizes for those who may not be the fastest, but are willing to be the wackiest," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "It's going to be a blast on Saturday!"

The MVA will be looking along the course for its top choice in the following categories: Best Costume (male and female), Craziest Hair, Most Awesome Shoes, Shortest Shorts (male and female), and Ugliest Running Shoes. Winners for each category will receive a $100 gift certificate from The Athlete's Foot or All-Star Sporting Goods.

As of last count, 870 runners had registered for the race. Concepcion also asked for community support in making the event a success.

"We ask all drivers to drive slowly and carefully and follow the direction of all traffic officers along the race course," said Concepcion. "Of course, we need all dogs to be restrained, as well. And after running 10, 20, or 30K in our tropical sun, these runners are going need some encouragement. Let's cheer on our guests and hometown favorites and give them that extra push they need to finish and finish well."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Runners dressed as bride and groom pose for a photo after completing the 2017 Saipan Marathon. This Saturday, runners may win Best Costume, Craziest Hair, Shortest Shorts, Most Awesome Shoes, and Ugliest Shoes awards and will each receive $100 worth of gift certificates from The Athlete's Foot or All-Star Sporting Goods.

The marathon is certified by the International Association of Athletic Federations through the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races.

Registration fee for 50K and marathon is $95 for U.S. and CNMI participants, and $85 for half marathon and 10K participants. The fee for high school and junior high school students will be $55. Registration will include the awards banquet, a finishers T-shirt, and a certificate of completion.

Major sponsors this year are Delta Airlines, the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands, DFS Saipan Limited, and Northern Marianas Athletics.

Platinum sponsors are IT&E, donating $5,000 and Hyatt Regency Saipan, donating over $4,000 in gift certificates. Gold sponsors are Ideal Signs, donating $3,000 and HK Express, donating $2,000. Silver sponsors are Pacific Insurance, J.C. Tenorio Enterprises, Serenti Hotel, Hana Tour Service Inc., Taiwan Rainbow Wings Inc., and BARREL (Korea), each donating $1,000. Saipan Beach Hotel and Kanoa Resort round out the list of Silver sponsors.

Aid stations will be manned by Mariana Resort & Spa, Kensington Hotel Saipan, Aqua Resort Club, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Imperial Pacific Int'l, Pacific Development Inc., Tasi Tours, Fiesta Resort & Spa, Kanoa Resort, Saipan World Resort, IT&E, Coral Ocean Golf Resort, and Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

The event is also supported by Dept. of Public Safety, Dept. of Fire & Emergency Medical Services, Dept. of Public Works, Dept. of Public Lands, Div. of Parks & Grounds, Saipan Mayor's Office, Hawaiian Rock Products, and Marianas Health Services.

All competitors are required to pick up their race packets in person on March 9, from 4pm to 6pm at the American Memorial Park, without exception. The races will start and finish at Micro Beach with the 50K event beginning at 4:30am, the full marathon at 5am, the half marathon at 5:30am, and the 10K at 6am. The cut-off time for the 50K and marathon will be 9:30am with runners in this event should be near the intersection of Navy Hill and Chalan Pale Arnold Road to continue their races.

Cash payments are accepted only at the MVA office located in San Jose, Saipan. For a direct link to the on-line registration site or for more information, contact Diaz at 1-670-664-3210 or send email to ediaz@mymarianas.com. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

SONICS

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faked off two defenders, and was fouled.

The Sonics guard had no problems making the two pressure-packed free throws to give the Sonics a 3-point lead, 35-32.

The Ol'Aces Extreme then attempted many times to buy a basket, but again faltered. In that possession, the Ol'Aces muffed at least six shots and when the Sonics finally got the rebound, Francisco drove strong to the basket anew and drew the contact. He added two more free throws and countered with a layup after Jess Laniyo drilled the Ol'Aces Extreme's last basket to peg the final score.

Francisco was one of the two double-figure scorers for the Sonics, as he finished with 10 points. He registered the Sonics' first two field goals. Tony Kim top-scored for the winning team with 15, while John Caruana added 8, including back-to-back treys in the first half that ended in standoff, 19-19.

King led the Ol'Aces Extreme's losing cause after firing 14 markers.

Meanwhile, the Ol'Aces avoided a 0-2 performance in the opening day as their U18 crew defeated the Rollers 1 in the second game, 56-42.

Coby Santos towed the Ol'Aces to their debut win after sizzling for 24 points. N-Nes Siech backed him up, adding 16, while Dean Blake chipped in 9.

Matthew Richardson had 12 to pace the Rollers 1, which was outplayed at the guard position, with Santos and Siech joining forces and hitting successive baskets.

Besides the Ol'Aces and Sonics, 11 other teams are entered in the boys U18 division. The Sonics have three squads, while Rollers Basketball Club and the Warriors have two apiece. Completing the field are Ol'Ace Extreme and Ol'Aces Elite, Kagman Sparks, Tinian, and Chinatown Titans.

In the boys U15 division, the Sonics and Rollers are fielding two teams each and will be joined by Ol'Aces Elite, Young Warriors, and Tinian in the hunt for the championship.

First Game

Sonics 39 — Kim 11, Francisco 10, Caruana 8, Galang 6, Rizo 2, Bartolo 2, Puri 2.

Ol'Aces Extreme 34 — King 14, Deleon Guerrero 7, Laniyo 4, Mizutani 4, They 3, Soriano 2.

Scoring by halves: 19-19, 39-34.

Second Game

Ol'Aces 56 — Santos 24, Siech 16, Blake 9, Abejo 4, Fred 2.

Rollers 1 42 — Richardson 12, Ogumoro 6, Duenas 6, Quitugua 5, Factor 4, Hudkins 3, Cruz 2, Tenorio 2.

Scoring by halves: 36-24, 56-42.

SAPONG

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the Cook Islands' Patty Taea; Fiji's Miriama Senokono; the Federated States of Micronesia's Alvin Marvin Martin, Nauru's Jonah Harris, New Zealand's Hamish Carson, Julian Oakley, Tomas Walsh, and Eliza McCartney; Papua New Guinea's Mazmie-Lee Marai; Tahiti's Namataiki Tevenino; the Solomon Islands' Paul Mau'nikeni; Tuvalu's Karalo Maibuca; and Vanuatu's Tikie Terrie Mael.

The U.S. topped the medal standings in the tournament after collecting six gold medals, 10 bronzes, and two silvers. Ethiopia was second with its 4-1-0 tally, while Poland came in at third with its 2-2-1 medal haul.

LITTLE

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allowed McDonald's to score only in the second inning behind Dean Hodges' two-RBI double.

G-Boy Pangelinan pitched in the first three innings for the Little Legals and threw a two-hitter, while striking out two. Gunner Sablan relieved him and the closer also had a two-hitter and fanned out seven batters.

Meanwhile, in the Minors division match last Sunday, the Braves tallied two homers to top the Comets in the league's pilot program, which has teams playing in a one-hour limit.

The Braves were on target right at the get-go when Max Taitano blasted a two-run homer and Javen Camacho hit a solo shot. Camacho was not done yet, as he followed his solo homer with a two-run triple, and the Braves went on to complete the victory after three innings, as they registered three more runs in the last off the Comets' miscues.

In the other Minors division game last weekend, the Cubs coasted past the Northern Yankees, 11-2.

The Cubs needed only one a half inning to earn the win, as they got off to a rousing start.

Eight batters on the Cubs' top of the order reached home plate and three scored twice, giving their team an 11-1 lead after one complete inning. The Cubs' runs came in succession as two of the Northern Yankees pitchers could not find their form. Five of the Cubs' total runs at the top of the first were made off wild pitches.

The Northern Yankees recorded only one run at top of the first and were done in that inning after only four batters. Then in the second, bad signs greeted the Northern Yankees, as Cubs starting pitcher Joseph Lizama struck out the first two batters.

An Anthony Tudela run off a fielder's choice gave the Northern Yankees some break, but that was it for the losing squad, as Franklin Reyes was tagged out at home by the Cubs catcher.

2017 Tan Holdings Inter-Company Basketball League

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan players and their supporters hoist the championship trophy following a 78-71 victory over Kanoa Resort in their title rematch in the 2017 Tan Holdings Inter-Company Basketball League last Friday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Kanoa Resort players pose with their runner-up medals and are joined in the photo by Tan Siu Lin Foundation manager Merlie Tolentino, standing left, and TanHoldings vice president for Corporate Affairs Cathy Attao-Toves, standing second left, during the awards ceremony.

Kanoa Resort's Dindo Pablo, right, dribbles and is closely guarded by Fiesta Resort's Elmer Esdrelon.

Kanoa Resort employees perform during the halftime break in the finals.

Kanoa Resort's Sonny Encarnacion (8) is surrounded by Fiesta Resort players.

Fiesta Resort's Elmer Esdrelon, right, dribbles away from the defense of Kanoa Resort's Sonny Encarnacion.

Four Shirley's Coffee Shop players receive their third place medals.

Kanoa Resort's Douglas Schmidt, left, goes for an isolation play against Fiesta Resort's Paul Quizon, center, while the former's teammate, Carl Francisco, gets ready to provide a pick.

NFL salary cap increases to $177.2M

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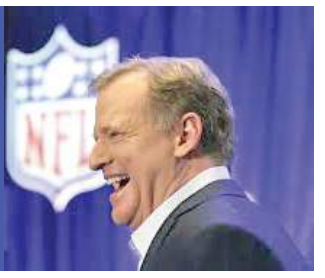

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Sports

LeBron, Nance power Cavaliers past Pistons

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Sonics win season opener

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Sonics played steadier in the home-stretch to slip past the Ol'Aces Extreme, 39-34, during the opening game in the 2018 Frank M. Diaz Memorial Youth League last Monday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Raven Francisco knocked in important charities in the closing minutes of their boys U15 division game to hand the Sonics a win in their season debut. Francisco went 4-for-4 from the stripe with his first two charities under the two-minute mark giving the Sonics more breathing room.

Before Francisco's free throw shots, the Ol'Aces Extreme moved within one, 32-33, after drawing back-to-back baskets from Steve King. The Ol'Aces Extreme then had a chance to grab the lead, but made a couple of misses, while Francisco took matters into his own hands,

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Sonics' Raven Francisco, right, drives and draws a foul on Ol'Aces Extreme's Leo Naraja, while the latter's teammate, Francisco Mizutani, stays close in the play during the second half of their boys U15 division game in the opening of the Diaz youth caging last Monday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Little Legals and Braves down foes

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Little Legals and Braves prevailed in their respective games in the 2018 Saipan Little League Baseball held over the weekend at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

In the Majors division, the Little Legals topped McDonald's, 12-2, while the Braves defeated the Comets in the Minors tiff, 9-3.

The Little Legals used a six-run top of the second inning to gain cushion and set up the easy win over McDonald's. The Little Legals got three earned runs, two off wild pitches, and one off a stolen base to make up for a 1-2-3 inning in the first. They then scored two runs each in the third and fourth inning and one apiece in the last two.

On defense, the Little Legals

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
A Braves player practices his batting stance before their game against the Comets in the Minors division of the 2018 Saipan Little League Baseball last Sunday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

Sapong sets PB in 60m run

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

IAAF PHOTO
The CNMI's Zarinae Sapong acknowledges the crowd as she is introduced during the qualifying heat for the 60m run in the 17th IAAF World Indoor Championships held last weekend at the Arena Birmingham in Birmingham, United Kingdom.

CNMI runner Zarinae Sapong earned a personal best in the 60m race in the 17th IAAF World Indoor Championships held at the Arena Birmingham in Birmingham, United Kingdom.

Sapong clocked in at 8.54 seconds in the qualifying heat to surpass the 8.70 seconds she registered during the 16th IAAF World Indoor Championships in Portland in 2016. The Commonwealth sprinter was on Heat 7 of the qualifier and raced last Friday (Saturday Saipan time) against athletes from Germany, Jamaica, Poland, Italy, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, and Ghana. Germany's Tatjano Pinto won the heat after narrowly beating Jamaica's Remona Burchell, who submitted 7.19 seconds against the former's 7.18.

France's Carolle Zahi logged the fastest qualifying time, as she topped Heat 4 after checking in at 7.11 seconds. However, Zahi only placed eighth in the finals, while Ivory Coast had a 1-2 finish with Murielle Ahoure (6.97 seconds) ruling the event and Marie-Josee Ta Lou (7.05 seconds) earning the runner-up honors. Switzerland's Mujinga Kambundji settled for the bronze after losing to Ta Lou in the photo finish.

Meanwhile, Northern Marianas Athletics coach Elias Rangamar accompanied Sapong to the indoor competition, which ran from March 1 to 4 and drew more than 400 athletes.

Sapong was one of the 12 athletes who represented the Oceania Athletics Association in the five-day competition. Also on the OAA team were Australia's Damien Birkenhead, Ryan Gregson, Nicholas Hough, Kurtis Marschall, Michelle Jenneke, Nina Kennedy, and Sally Pearson;

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